黒鉄

KUROGANE

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KUROGANE 3

Kei Toume

Translated by Ikai Hiroe
Lettered by Takka Takka

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CONTENTS

A Note from the Author...iv
Honorifics Explained...v

Chapter 7: Strange Paradise ..3
Chapter 8: Crimson
Episode 1..53
Episode 2..85
Episode 3..105
Episode 4..129
Chapter 9: Mask
Episode 1..161
Episode 2..185
Episode 3..209
Episode 4..229

Translation Notes...253
Original Japanese Fold-out Poster Art...257
Preview of Volume 4..262

A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

Eternal Recurrence

Recent photograph of the author

HONORIFICS EXPLAINED

Throughout the Del Rey Manga books, you will find Japanese honorifics left intact in the translations. For those not familiar with how the Japanese use honorifics and, more important, how they differ from American honorifics, we present this brief overview.

Politeness has always been a critical facet of Japanese culture. Ever since the feudal era, when Japan was a highly stratified society, use of honorifics—which can be defined as polite speech that indicates relationship or status—has played an essential role in the Japanese language. When addressing someone in Japanese, an honorific usually takes the form of a suffix attached to one's name (example: "Asuna-san"), or as a title at the end of one's name, or in place of the name itself (example: "Negi-sensei" or simply "Sensei").

Honorifics can be expressions of respect or endearment. In the context of manga and anime, honorifics give insight into the nature of the relationship between characters. Many English translations into English leave out these important honorifics, and therefore distort the feel of the original Japanese. Because Japanese honorifics contain nuances that English honorifics lack, it is our policy at Del Rey not to translate them. Here, instead, is a guide to some of the honorifics you may encounter in Del Rey Manga.

-san: This is the most common honorific and is equivalent to Mr., Miss, Ms., Mrs. It is the all-purpose honorific and can be used in any situation where politeness is required.

-sama: This is one level higher than "-san" and is used to confer great respect.

-dono: This comes from the word "tono," which means "lord." It is even a higher level than "-sama" and confers utmost respect.

-kun: This suffix is used at the end of boys' names to express familiarity or endearment. It is also sometimes used by men amongst friends, or when addressing someone younger or of a lower station.

-chan: This is used to express endearment, mostly toward girls. It is also used for little boys, pets, and even amongst lovers. It gives a sense of childish cuteness.

Bazu: This is an informal way to refer to a boy, similar to the English terms "kid" or "squirt."

Sempai/ Senpai: This title suggests that the addressee is one's senior in a group or organization. It is most often used in a school setting, where underclassmen refer to their upperclassmen as "sempai." It can also be used in the workplace, such as when a newer employee addresses an employee who has seniority in the company.

Kohai: This is the opposite of "-sempai," and is used toward underclassmen in school or newcomers in the workplace. It connotes that the addressee is of a lower station.

Sensei: Literally meaning "one who has come before," this title is used for teachers, doctors, or masters of any profession or art.

-[blank]: This is usually forgotten in these lists, but it is perhaps the most significant difference between Japanese and English. The lack of honorific means that the speaker has permission to address the person in a very intimate way. Usually, only family, spouses, or very close friends have this kind of permission. Known as *yobisute*, it can be gratifying when someone who has earned the intimacy starts to call one by one's name without an honorific. But when that intimacy hasn't been earned, it can be very insulting.

黒
KURO GANE
鉄
Kei Toume
3

黒鉄
KUROGANE
冬目景
TOUME KEI

黒鉄 KURO GANE

第七幕 STRANGE PARADISE ——— 3
（沈黙の肖像）

第八幕 CRIMSON
（鮮の道者）

第一景 Episode 1 ——— 53
第二景 Episode 2 ——— 85
第三景 Episode 3 ——— 105
第四景 Episode 4 ——— 129

第九幕 MASK
（罪人の仮面）

第一景 Episode 1 ——— 161
第二景 Episode 2 ——— 185
第三景 Episode 3 ——— 209
第四景 Episode 4 ——— 229

Chapter 7

第七幕

STRANGE PARADISE

(沉默の肖像)

Fog's setting in thick, Jintetsu...

Jintetsu, we shouldn't venture much farther.
We should find a place to camp for the night.
I told you to take a left back there.
Can you find the road?
MUMBLE MUMBLE
.....
.....
CLIK
It's too humid out here to start a fire.

We're gonna have to camp out on a tree tonight.
GRRRR
Dammit, it's getting dark quickly.
Wild dogs...
CRACKLE

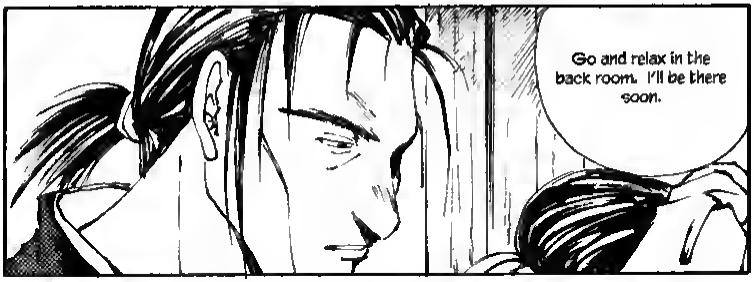
Uh...
I thought you were a wild dog.
I'm so sorry.
Chirp!
I see.
That's not good.
The thick fog prevents locals from traveling in these mountains.
I'm just a traveler. The fog forced me to camp out for the night.

If you're familiar, can you show me how to get to the ridge?
Well, not...
...exactly.
Are you a woodcutter?
I would, but it's foggy. It'll be dark soon, and we have wild dogs around here.
Can I offer you shelter for the night?
Is thick fog common around here?
GASP
Thank you.
No problem. I've offered shelter to many travelers.
CAW
Yes. As a result, nobody else lives in the mountains.
SNAP

I didn't see real roads, only animal tracks.
I have not seen many travelers lately.
I haven't offered lodging in a long time.
Where are you headed?
No particular destination.
I thought I would go to Shinmachi.
KRSH
We're home.
GASH
I see. I sometimes sell wild herbs at Fujioka...
... which is located past Shimonita.
GASH

It's a house...
It's a small house
I'm home!
CREAK

There's no need to be scared.
.....
.....
He's just a traveler that got lost in the fog.


Go and relax in the back room. I'll be there soon.

For a moment, I thought I had been deceived by a fox.
My wife doesn't like strangers.
PATAN
I'm sorry.

CLTTER

Did you make this?
I hope it's palatable.
Yes. It's only some wild greens and noodles.
Thank you.
GTZ
GTZ
SLURP

... the way I eat.
Oh, please don't mind ...
.....
It's too horrible to show people.
I was injured badly.
You're not going to remove your mask?
I see
Have you ever...
... killed people before?

I didn't mean to make you feel uncomfortable.
It's just that...
Some were for self-defense. Others were for money. Don't worry. I don't kill katagis.
.....
... I do envy people that have the freedom to travel.
...I make my living out on the mountain. I'm here by choice, but...
Too many to count.
I also...
... didn't feel that you were an ordinary traveler.

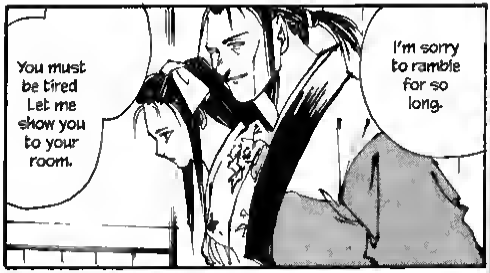
You seem to be surrounded by a strange force.
Some are hateful spirits, but others are seeking peace and salvation.
You seem to be trying to get away from both.
One day, you will be conquered by either side, and your true nature will surface.
Excuse me. I live an isolated life, so...
... I have forgotten how to make polite conversation.
.....

I would have served tea. You don't have to do that.
.....
I think my wife likes you.

She is unwelcoming and quiet, but it's just her personality.
Please forgive her.
O-sei is a daughter of a samurai.
I was only a lowly craftsman.
I never thought I would meet such a beauty...
... deep in the mountains.
Thank you.
We eloped a long time ago.

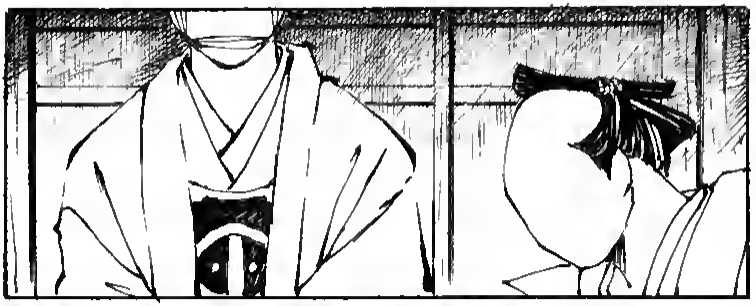
Her parents discovered our relationship.
They locked her in the house, and tried to stop me from seeing her. We decided to run away from town one night.
We wanted to live in an isolated area, away from curious eyes. It's been 3 years, but I'm afraid I can only offer a very humble life to my wife.
I don't want them to get rough.
Look at her white, smooth hands.
... just like the ones she was used to wearing.
I'm determined to at least dress her in the finest kimono ..
I can't stand to see a single splinter

I would do anything to protect these hands from harm.


You must be tired. Let me show you to your room.
I'm sorry to ramble for so long.

.....
That's very touching.

It' a very small house, so...
... there isn't a lot of room to spare.



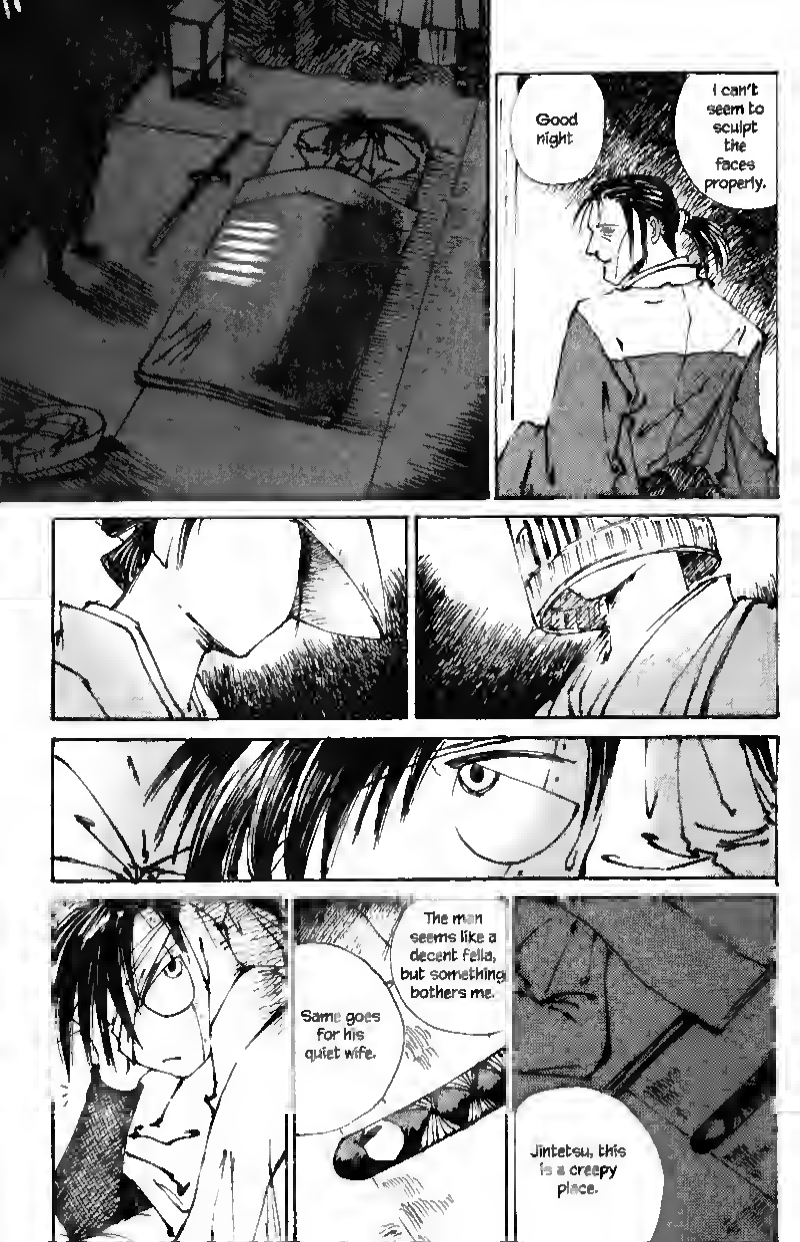
This is used as a storage room...
.....

Clocks and Karakuri dolls both use gears and springs to function

I used to make clocks.
I also used to make Karakuri dolls as a hobby.

You said you were a crafts-man...

Why didn't you create faces for them?


Good night
I can't seem to sculpt the faces properly.
The man seems like a decent fella, but something bothers me.
Same goes for his quiet wife.
Jintetsu, this is a creepy place.

What is that sound!?
It's the middle of the night!
...
SILENCE...
KIRIKIRI
KIRIRIRI

The fog hasn't cleared yet.
TWEET
This isn't good...
If you're not in a hurry, you're welcome to stay with us.
We don't mind.
Thank you.
I'd like to stay another night.

I should repay your kindness somehow
You don't have to strain yourself.
KIRI
THWAK
THWAK
That sound...

Yes, it's something I do every day. It's become a habit for me.
KIKIRI
Does the sound bother you?
Gears...
This sound?
I'm winding the gears.
The humidity seems to affect the gears, so I wind the clocks once a day.
Please carry them to the back.
I just heard the same noise last night. Where do these logs go?
Uh, no.
CLATTER

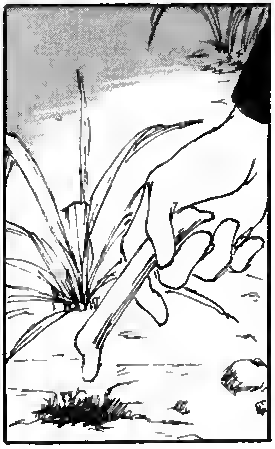
CRACK
You haven't done a lot of physical labor lately, have you?
You're worthless for your age..
Hey..
What is that?

BATSU!

Excuse me.

Dinner's ready.

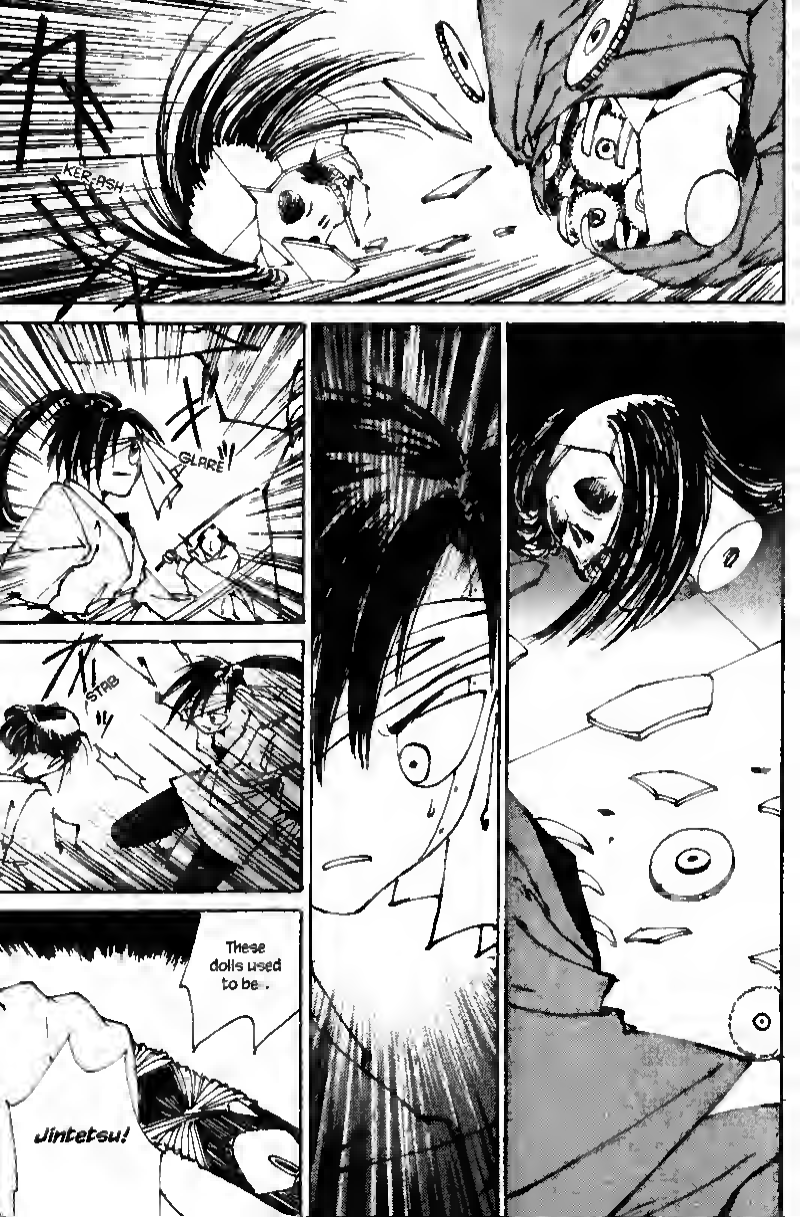
!



I don't need anything more tonight.
Sir?
GA-RAN
I thought I would leave tomorrow morning, even if there's fog.
I'll leave when I wake up on my own. I don't want to trouble you.
I see
SLIDE
PA-TAN

He's winding the...
... gears again.
KIRIRI
KIRIRI
KIRIRI

SLICE


KER-ASH
GLARE
STAB
These dolls used to be...
Jintetsu!

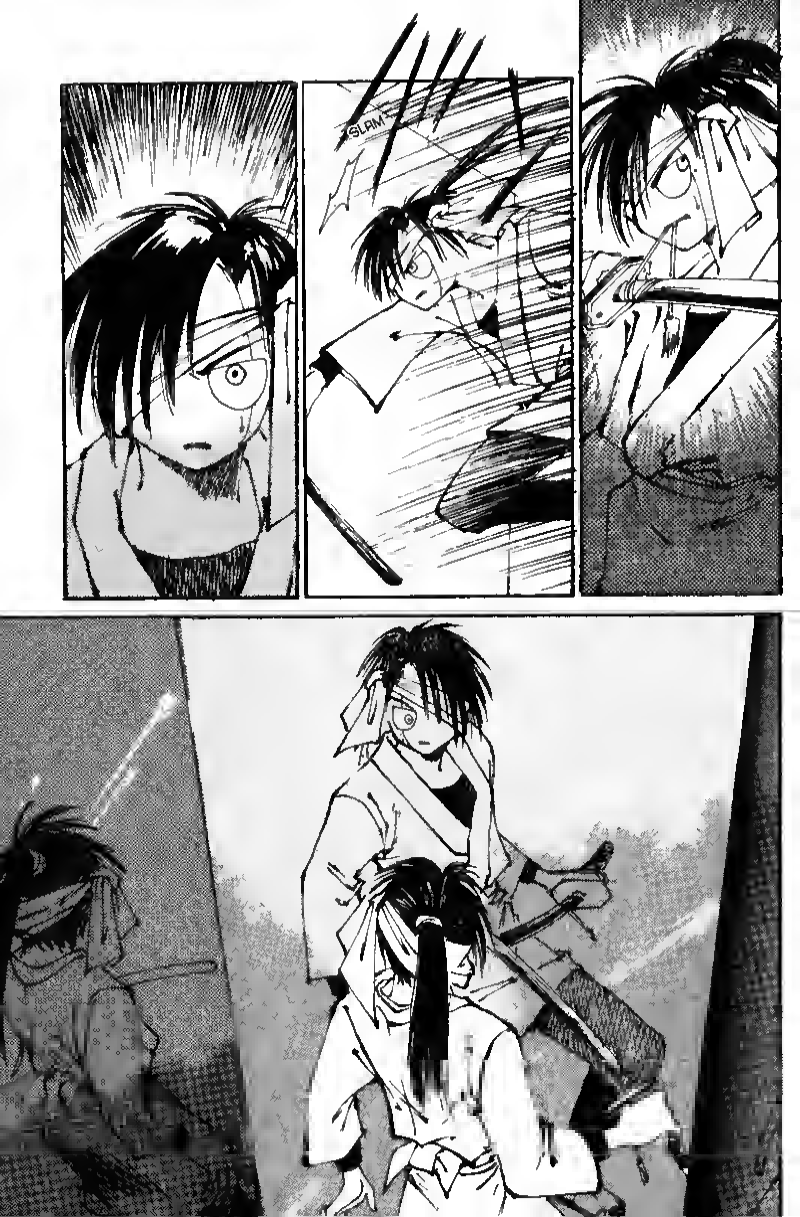
They were all lost travelers...
... lost in the fog, just like you.
Yes, they were human.
The bone I found in the back was...
... human.

I told you earlier.
We just want to live alone in peace.
Why do you do this?
CHK
So, I can't let you leave alive.
I won't say a word to anyone.
I can't trust you.

THUD
TRIP
BASAH
!
He disappeared!

Jintetsu,
behind you!

KICKK
KOF?
CLATTER


SLAM

This is one messed-up house!
Be careful, Jintetsu. He could pop out of anywhere.
SLICE
FLASH
!

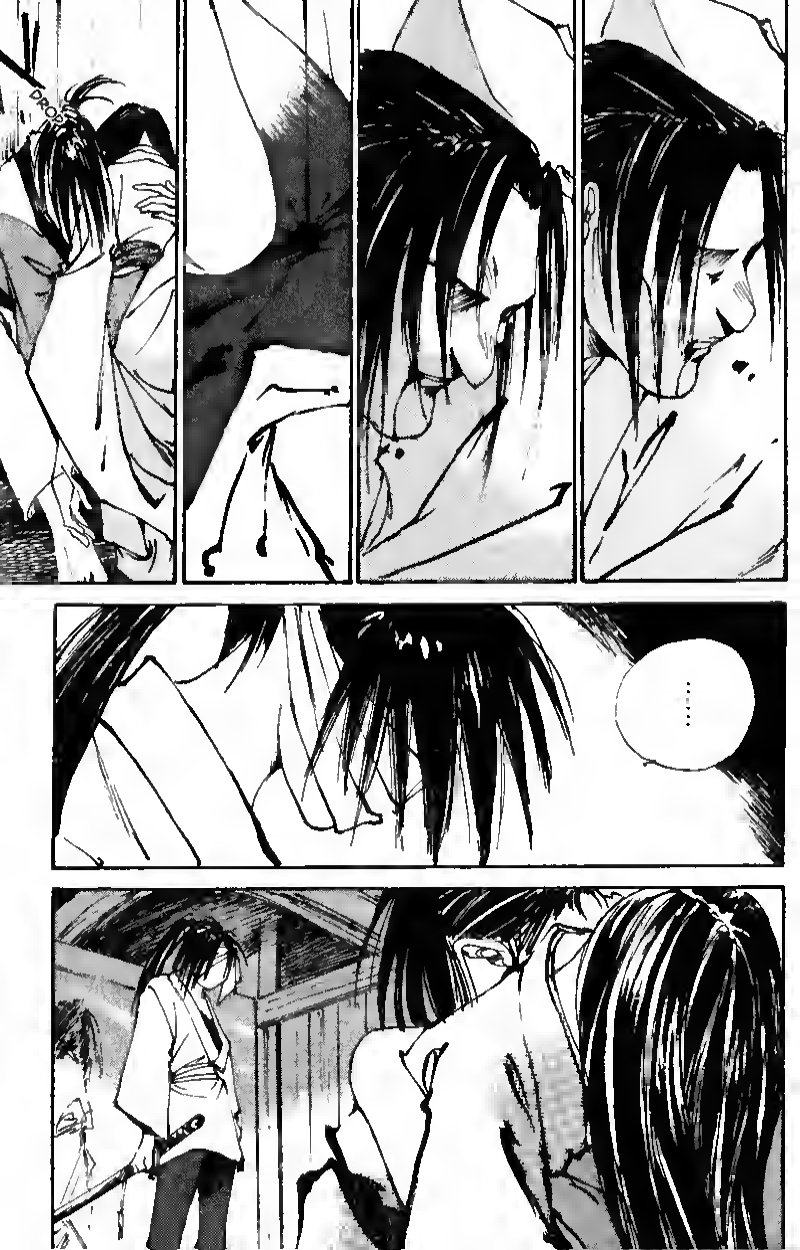
KIRI KIRIRI
I hurt the wife!

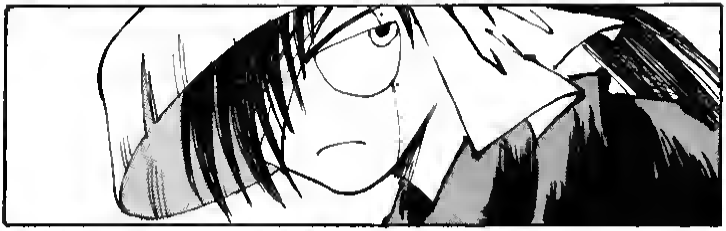
CRACK

She's a doll...
KIRI
GLITTER

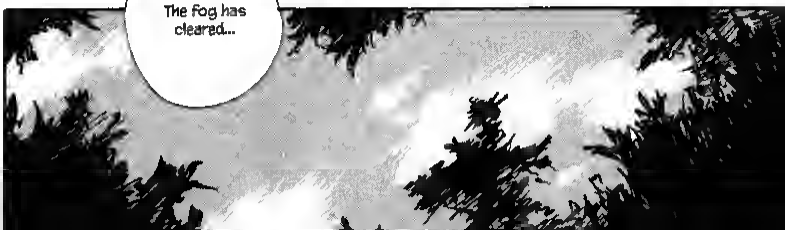
Sir, I believe...
... I was possessed.
I admit that I couldn't let people leave alive because
I wanted to live in peace, but I also wanted to create dolls out of them.
I wanted to find a way to resurrect my wife. I created a doll using my wife's skeleton
She was the first. I think I stepped past the boundary
of a doll-maker into a monster with this creation...
I think I did not re-create the dolls' faces to
maintain some sense of humanity.
This is...
... the end.

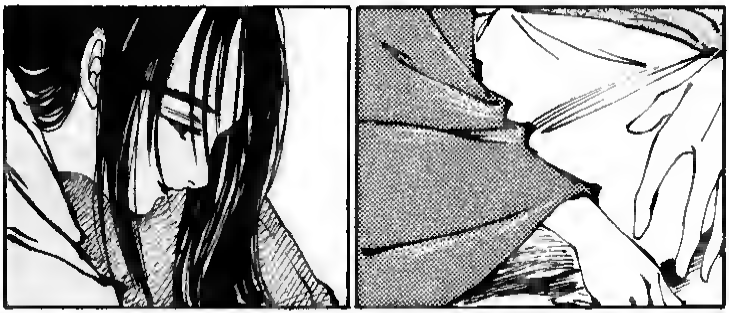
O-sei is broken, and I am tired.
... ever forgive me..
I wonder if she will..
STAB


PROOF
.....



Jintetsu, look!


The fog has cleared...



O-sei? Are you talking about O-sei from the Ito family?
Huh?
Ten years ago, she ran off with a local craftsman.
It's a famous story.
They were cornered in the mountain, so they jumped off a cliff together.
What was strange was that their bodies were never found.
GO-
KYU

Hey!
I'm coming!
Since then, the mountain's been plagued by thick fog. Everyone thinks O-sei's angry spirit is causing the fog.
If that doll was housing O-sei's soul...
... she wasn't an angry spirit. She was just trying to protect the life she had with her husband.
I hope they're both in heaven now.
.....

THE END OF CHAPTER 7

Chapter 8

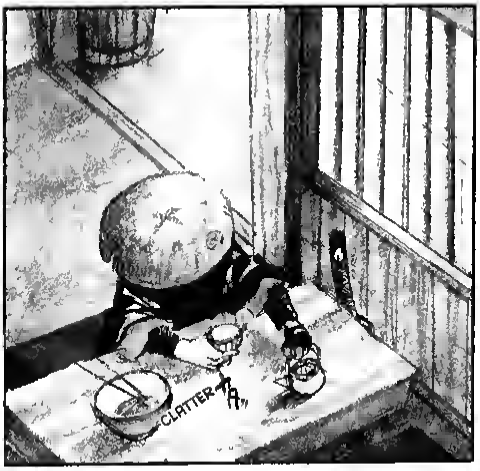
第八幕

CRIMSON

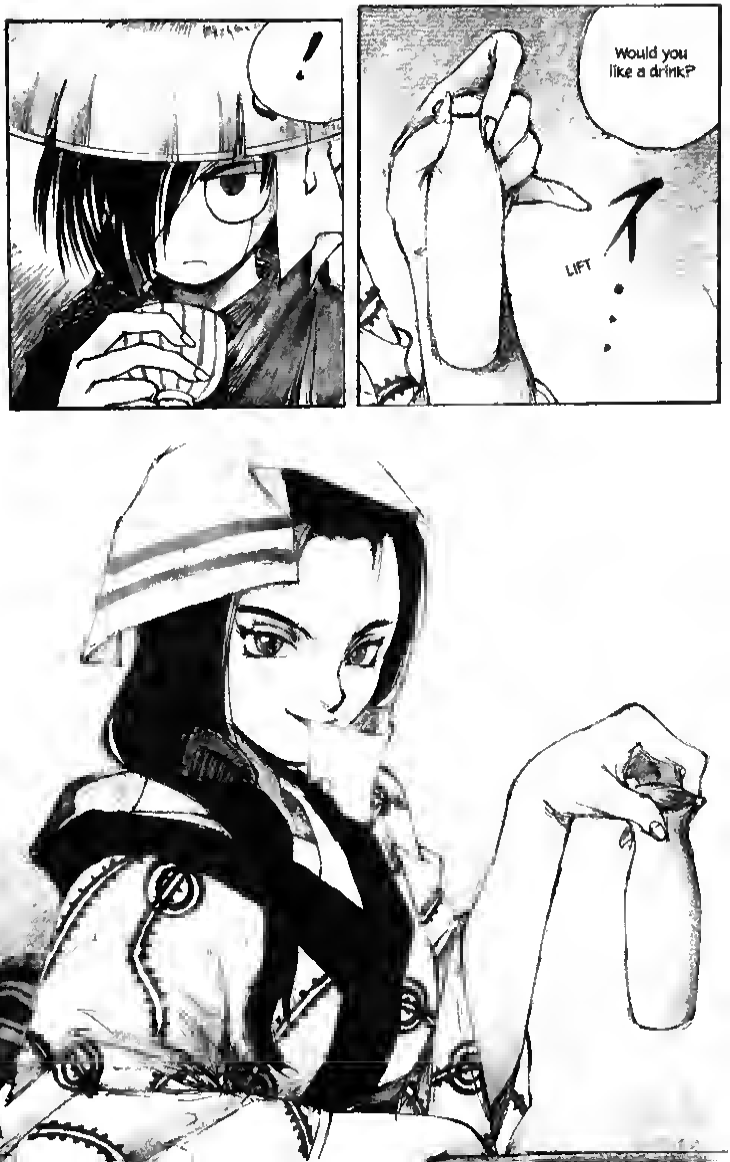
(薊の道者)
(あざみ　どうじゃ)

—第一景—

Episode 1


CLATTER

SIP


!
Would you like a drink?
LIFT

I'll pass.
I'm fine.
.....
C'mon. Loosen up, willya?
KLITTER
.....
You're Jinteteu of Steel, right?

I heard stories about you.
You're supposed to be one hell of a swordsman for your age. I hear you're also a drifter with no boss.
I can tell by the way you look.
You can tell I'm not a katagi woman.
.....
Your face is covered with a steel mask...
... that you never remove.
I also hear..
... you're an assassin for hire.

Ma'am..
What do you want from me?
There's 2 ryou inside.
You're quick.
supa

I want you...
... to kill a man for me
.....
Kill a man?
Of course, he's not a katagi.
I can't talk about it here.
If you do a good job, I'll pay you a bonus.
©TLAN

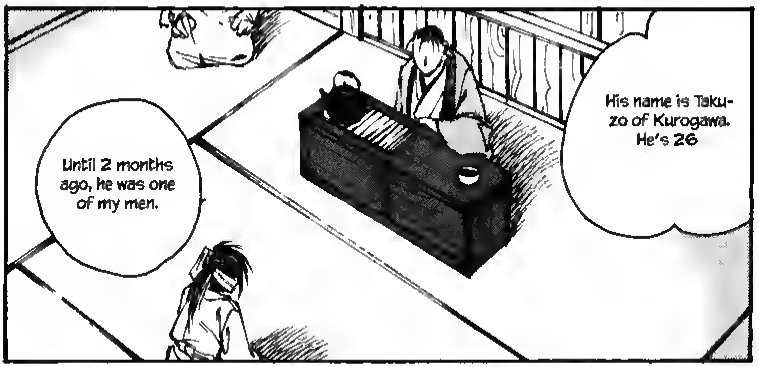
I'm in a hurry.
You're gonna have to ask someone else.
I have to meet someone in Tsumagojyoku soon.
2 ryou isn't enough for you?
How much do you want?

HARRUMPH
.....
ZZZ
WHOOSH

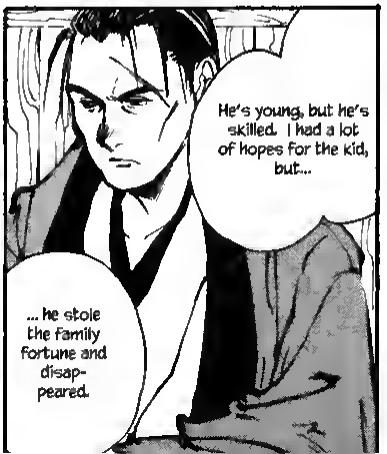
It's been a long time, Jinbetsu...

So, you really are Jinbeisu of Steel...
I heard that you were dead.
I was dead, but I was brought back to life.
I was badly injured, so I'm going to keep my mask on
It's unusual for you to crack a joke.
I don't know what happened, but I'm glad you're still alive.
So...
TAP
I had one of my men rush to find you...
... and I'm sure you know what I want.

You've guessed by now that...
... I want you to kill a man.


His name is Takuzo of Kurogawa. He's 26
Until 2 months ago, he was one of my men.

I'm asking for your help because I want to keep this on the quiet side.
I'd like for you to act with that in mind.
Sure.


He's young, but he's skilled. I had a lot of hopes for the kid, but...
... he stole the family fortune and disappeared.

... want you to bring someone back.
I also ..
Her name is O-en and she's my wife.

Boss, are you sure?
I heard that Master Yashiro of Misaka planned...
... on staying single?
Only Toukichi knows about my past.
It's been 10 years.
I have no intention of getting married again.
I was married before I arrived in this region.

I believe that O-en is involved in this matter
Would you mind telling me what happened?
.....
ZZT
Before I arrived at Shimshu, I belonged...
... to Master Danbei's family. This was in Tamamura, up in Jyoushu.
My boss thought I was talented and by the time I was 25, I represented the family.
I was supposed to take over the family once he stepped down.
Master Danbei had twin daughters named O-ko and O-en.
Master arranged for me to marry the younger daughter, O-en.

Soon after, I found out that Master Danbei
—had been involved with a loan shark that was working with the local constable.
The constable was an in-law of O-ko, my boss's daughter. The family also had ties to the powerful Genzaburo family in Fukaya, up in Bushu.
That would also put O-ko in a tough spot.
I was torn.
I advised my boss to get out of his dealings with
However, that meant making enemies out of the constable and the Genzaburo Clan.

I couldn't just watch my boss go on with this business.
The family also couldn't make an enemy out of a very powerful clan
I left my wife and decided to strike out on my own
Unfortunately, while I was leaving, I ended up...
... exchanging blows with members of the Genzaburo clan.
I came to Shinshu, which is outside of Genzaburo's territory as well as the constable's jurisdiction.
I found a boss here and worked under him.
Eventually, the Danbei family failed and crumbled. I hear he died of illness.
Nobody knew what happened to O-en.

Someone spotted Takuzo with a woman resembling O-en in Neba at an inn.
There's a popular barmaid by the same name in Hatagoki. I hear she's originally from Jyoushu to boot.
The Danbei family was crushed because of the business dealings that I mentioned.
I'm sure O-en hates me.
It's been ten years, but she's not a forgiving woman.
I understand the situation now, but...
... what should I say to her to convince her to come with me?
I would like to apologize to her. I am partly to blame for her unhappiness.
That said, she's not going to come willingly, I'm sure.

Well, ...
I hope I'm just worrying too much.
If this whole situation stemmed from her hate for me,
it would be bad for her.
The Neba inn isn't a large place.
Takuzo has a scar on his chin. Look for that.
Tou-kichi-san...
... is O-ko still alive in Fukaya?
She's dead.
It's a long story.

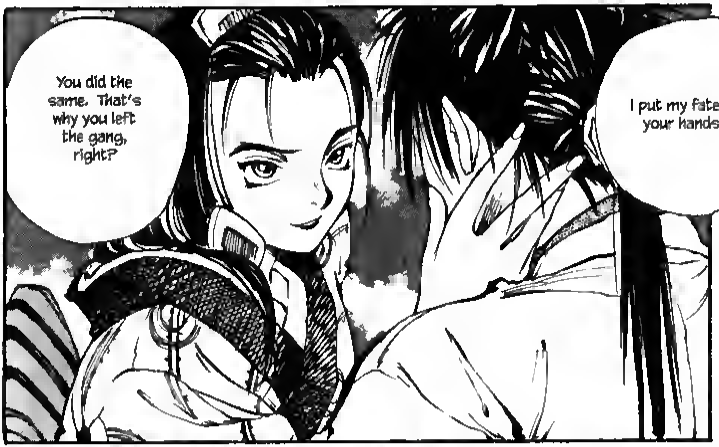
Two and three coins.
Dammit, here you go.
TINK
TINK
Today's not my lucky day.
I'm out of change!

* Nango- a gambling game using spare change. It is played by having your opponent guess the number of coins you hold in your hand.
How long do you plan on having your men loiter with nothing to do?
They have nothing else to do.
PFFT
They're playing Nango* again?
I would think they would get sick of the game by now.
They're mostly unemployed horse dealers and laborers.
It ain't that easy, woman.
You have enough men to get the job done.
HAHAHA
What's wrong with that? They're young, they're looking for a fight, and they have nothing to lose.
I'd rather deal with these guys than hire an assassin.
It's not like you can rent this place forever. Just get it over with.

Are you listening to me?
I hired another young one today.
O-en...
He's a jobless drifter, but he seemed like he was skilled.
. Master Yashiro's clan?
Are you sure you wanna take over...

Of course. Besides, it's too late now.
What are you talking about? Toseinin are misfits. Besides, Yashiro's men are all young, too.
I know these things. My father was a money-lender.
I'm not sure if it can be done.
I'm not sure if I can kill my boss.
He only has 8 men, but they're skilled. They're no match for a rag-tag team of misfits and a toseinin.

STROKE


You did the same. That's why you left the gang, right?
I put my fate in your hands.

You're a tough woman.

You're capable enough. Trust me.
You're the only one that can get revenge for me.

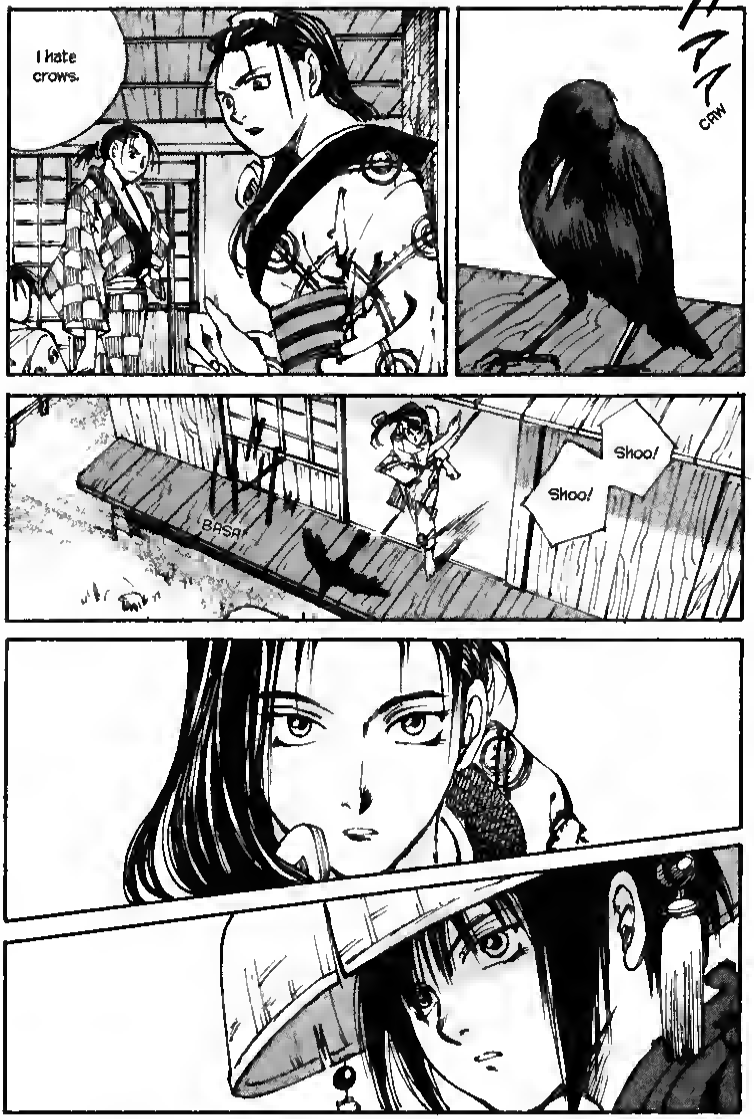
A scar on the chin isn't specific enough. Let's ask some people
We just passed by Neba. I didn't think we'd be back so quickly.
Let's try asking him.
CLANK
THUD
You bastard! Don't you ever show up here again!
Huh?
You cheapskate! You kicked me out over a cup of sake!

What?
A drifter with a scar on his face? That's a dime a dozen.
I was wondering if you've seen a drifter around here with a scar on his face.
Oh yeah. She works at a joint called Benya.
She's a pretty older woman with sharp eyes.
Thanks!
Is there a barmaid called O-en around here?
I have one more question for you.
Damn you! This is empty!
CRACK

4 and 2 coins.
Here. You won!
TINK
I lost again! Crap!
Anyone got spare change?
Hey, you got any spare cash?
My turn next.
PEEK...

!
GRAB
Take off your hat, willya?
GRAB
Gimme back my hat, you jerk!
Whoa, you're still a kid!

Whaddidya call me!?
I don't want to hear any fighting.
I'm sorry, ma'am.
Heh...
What a weird kid.
CRW


I hate crows.
カラス
CRW
BASA!
Shoo!
Shoo!

THE END OF CHAPTER 8, EPISODE 1

Chapter 6

第八幕

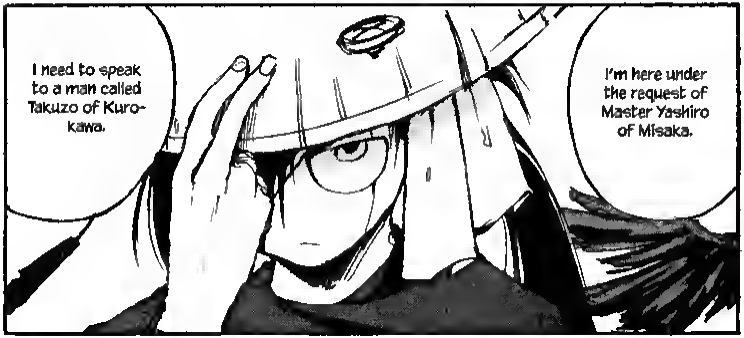
CRIMSON

(あざん どうじゃ)赤銅の道者

—第二景—

Episode 2

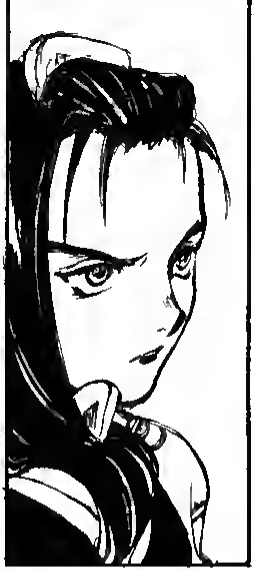
Jintetsu of Steel...

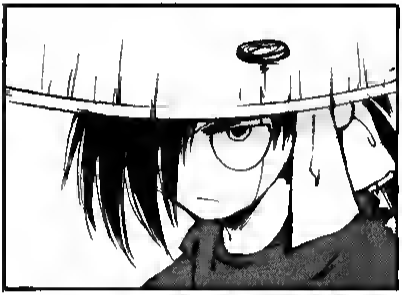

I need to speak to a man called Takuzo of Kurokawa.
I'm here under the request of Master Yashiro of Misaka.

I had no idea that you were O-en at the time.
After I heard Master Yashiro's story, I figured out what's going on.

Heh!
So you had to hurry to see Yashiro, eh?

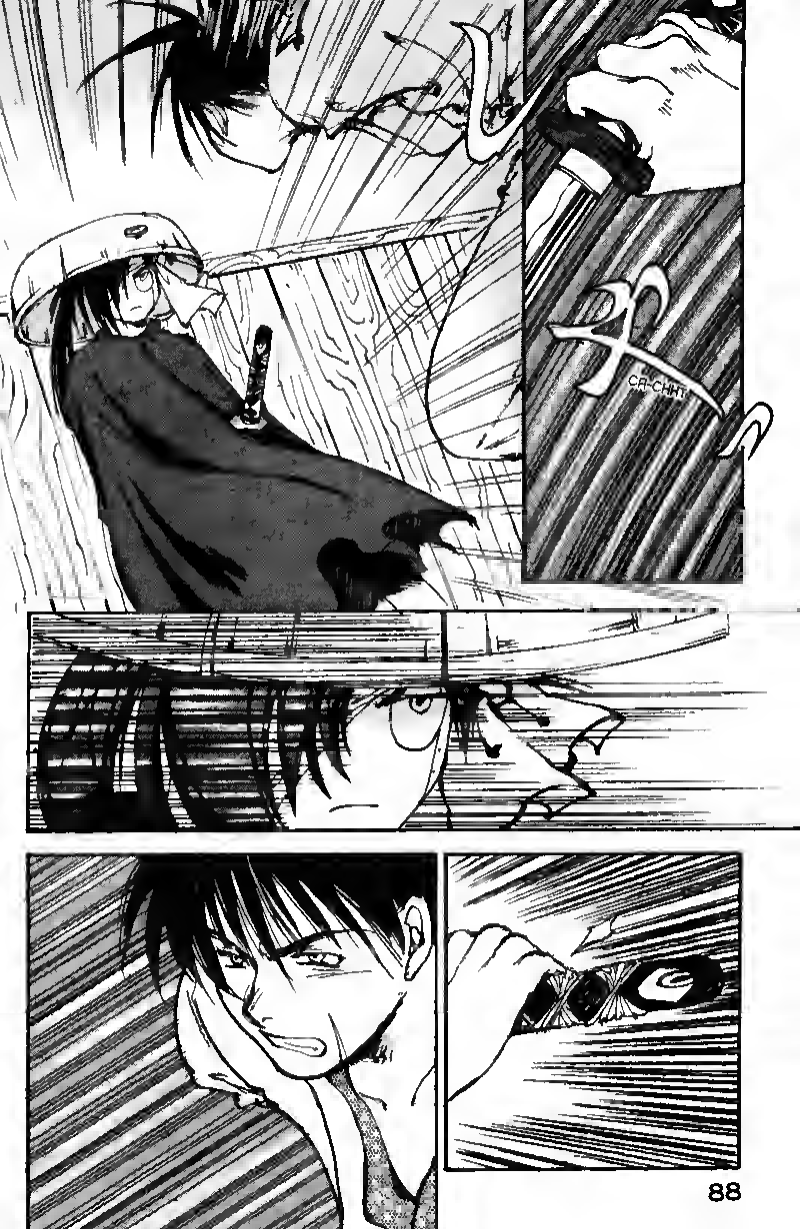
That bastard remembered me?
I'm Takuzo. Whaddya want?

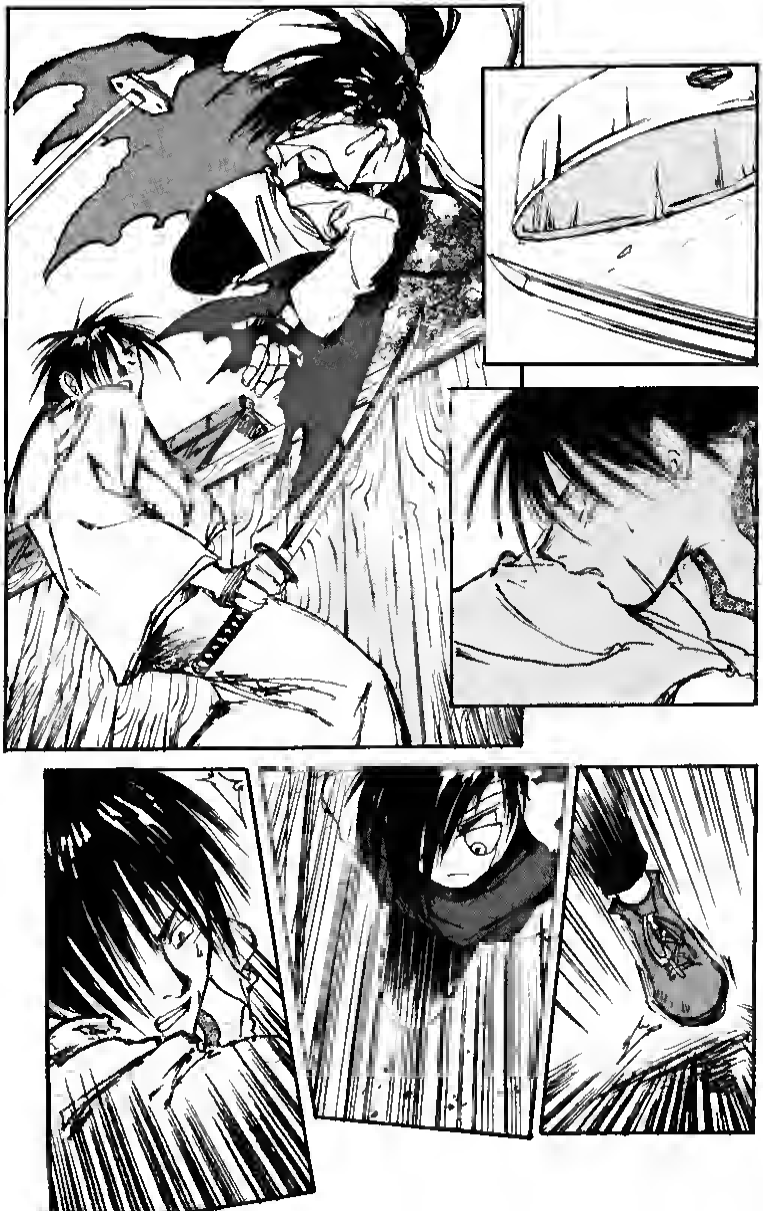




Takuzo..
So, you're Jintetsu of Steel?

You're still a kid. He must think I'm worthless.


CA-CHAT



ZZZZZ
!
THUD

Ma...
Makoto ...
What are you doing here?
Just doing my job, just like you.
Remember? I told you that we'll be enemies the next time we meet.
CHIN
Now that we're here, we should end this right here, right now.
You're mine!

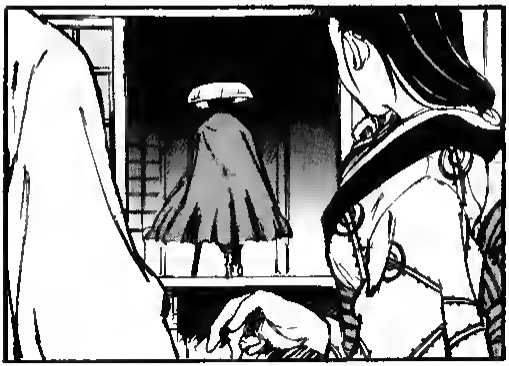
FLIP
What the hell!
SLIP
WHOOSH
Huh?
Where the hell did he go?
.....?

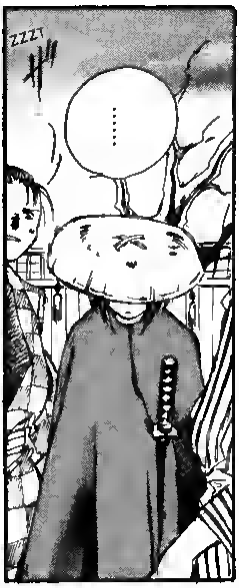
I can't handle Makoto.
I think we should leave and finish this some other time.
Hey...
Dammit, he got away!
LEAP
... you know the guy?
Kid, ..
Yes,
we have a history.

No, I'm not.

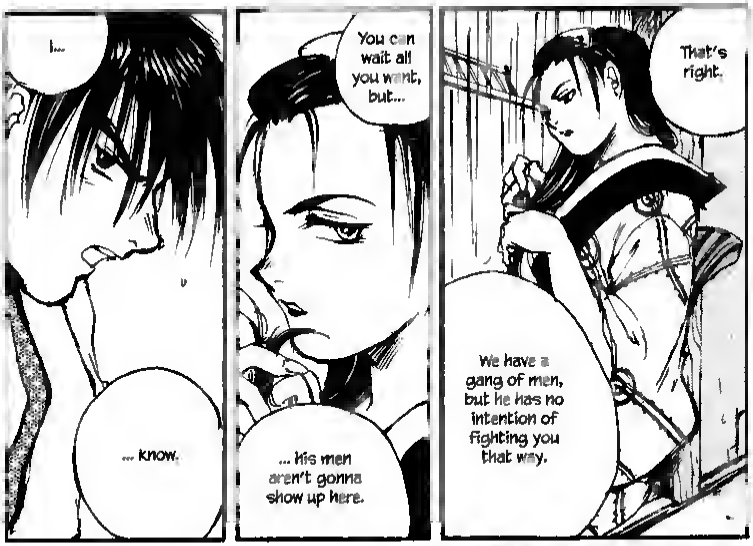
He called you Makoto.
Are you also known as the Scarlet Sparrow..?

Are you all right?




ZZZZ
.....

I doubt it.
He's hired an assassin.
It'll only be a matter of time before he sends his men over here.
How can you say that?
ZAAH
If he sends his men, it will create a scene.
People will discover that one of his own men betrayed him. He doesn't want other moneylenders to find out. He sent an assassin to keep the situation under wraps.
In that case...
If I kill this assassin, he'll just send another.


I...
... know.
You can wait all you want, but...
... his men aren't gonna show up here.
That's right.
We have a gang of men, but he has no intention of fighting you that way.

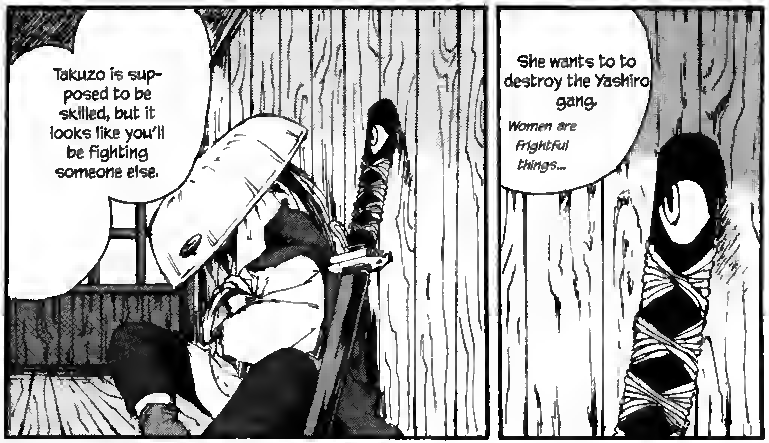
Takuzo...
I know how you feel. Yashiro was good to you.
ZAAA
ZZT

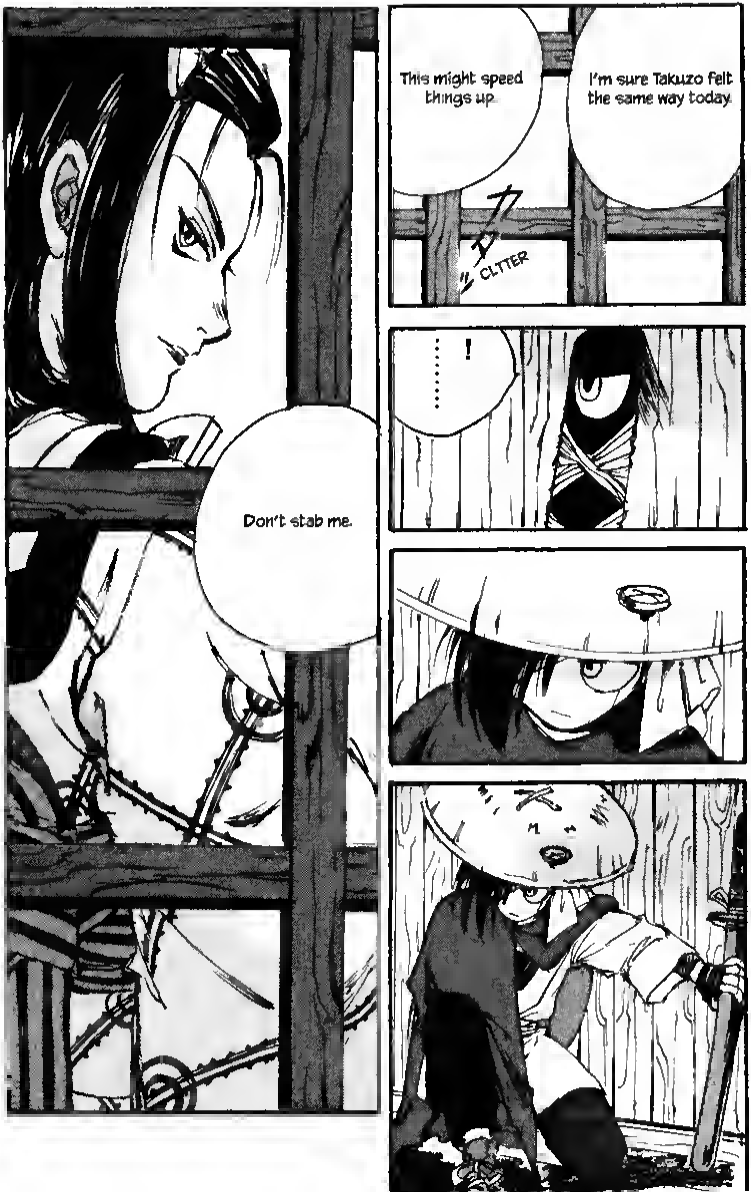
I feel bad for...
... putting you in a dishonorable position.
I may hate him, but he was a good boss to you.
It looks like he even appreciated your talent.
... there's still a way.
If you wanna go back...
You can bring me to Yashiro and tell him that...
... I tricked you into this whole mess. Tell him you just made a mistake.

... that this was a result of his actions from his past,
he might go easy on you.
I'm sure if Yashiro felt...
...you may not have to exchange blows with him.
Even if you can't go back to the gang...
I made up my mind.

I'll do what it takes to make you mine.
I left the clan to be with you.
If you want me to raise an army and go raid Yashiro's house tomorrow, I will.
Thank you.

You might be avenging your family, but...
. he was your husband. .
Are you sure?
What?
I can't respond to that.
Don't mention it.
ZARA
I only have hate for the man. I don't have any sympathy left for him


Takuzo is supposed to be skilled, but it looks like you'll be fighting someone else.
She wants to to destroy the Yashiro gang.
Women are frightful things...


This might speed things up.
I'm sure Takuzo felt the same way today.
CLITTER
!
Don't stab me.

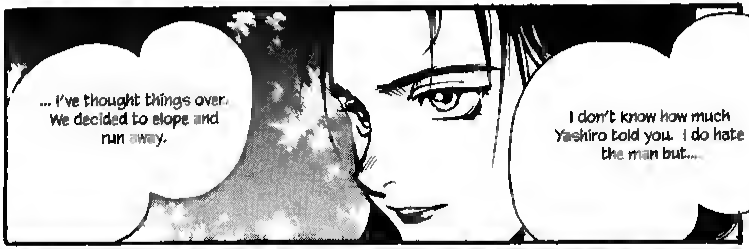
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
The breeze feels nice.
... want to talk to you outside.
It's not raining anymore.
I just...
Ma'am...
... how did you know I was here?
I hear...
.. you refuse to stay with your employer.
... accepts jobs, but not favors from your employers.
You're a strange, stubborn man who ...

What do you want?
You'll also want some-place secluded. That doesn't leave you with a lot of op-tions.
Since you're a drifter, you'll look for shelter when it rains.
Will you let us be?

THE END OF CHAPTER 8, EPISODE 2

Chapter 8
第八幕
CRIMSON
(あざみ どうじゃ)
薊の道者
—第三景—
Episode 3

Come on. Let us go.

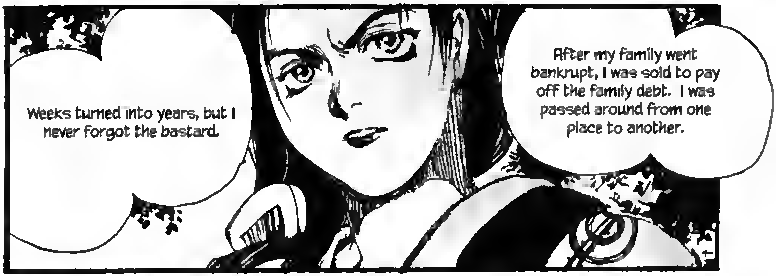

... I've thought things over. We decided to elope and run away.
I don't know how much Yashiro told you. I do hate the man but...

We don't expect you to do this for free. I'll pay what he paid you.

IF you can just look the other way...
... we'll go far, far away from here.

I'm sure you don't feel good about killing a less powerful man.
Think about it.
We're in love and we want to get married.
I want another chance at life and happiness.
O-en-san.
You're no actress.
BASA

Heh You saw right through me.
You're right. I want revenge,
so stay outta my way.


After my family went bankrupt, I was sold to pay off the family debt. I was passed around from one place to another.
Weeks turned into years, but I never forgot the bastard.

I had turned into a lowly barmaid, but...
.. he was doing well for himself as the head of a gang!

I finally found the coward here, in Shinshu.

O-en-san.
KASAH
I can see where you're coming from
You also have to see that Master Yashiro didn't have a whole lotta options himself.
Don't make me laugh.
... what killed my twin sister.
His juvenile sense of justice was...

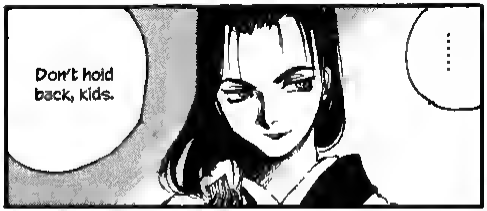
I'm sure he didn't tell you about that, eh?
I'm sure it haunts him to this day.
One of his men told me the story.
When O-ko-san found that Master Yashiro was leaving the family...
...she ran out of her home to try to convince him to return.
Genzaburo saw them and thought they were having an affair.
He ordered his men to kill them both.

Master Yashiro was attacked by several men.
O-ko-san died trying to defend him.
He is still haunted to this day that he couldn't save your sister's life.
So what?
I don't care that my sister died on his account.
Genza-buro didn't make a mistake.
Besides, you don't know the truth.
My sister was planning to run away with Yashiro.
.....
They had been in love for a long time.

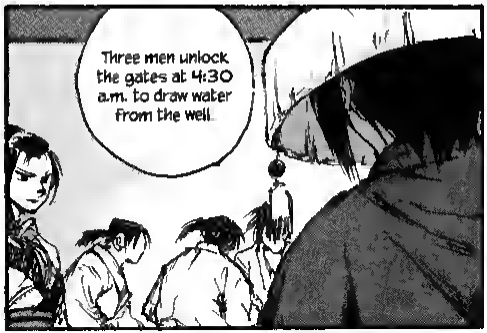
Our marriage was arranged by our parents.
Don't get the wrong idea.
I didn't give a hoot about Yashiro.
Master still loves O-ko-san..
That's why I'm angry that...
... my whole family was destroyed and my life
was ruined over a guy I didn't even love.
Do you under-stand me now?
This is between him and me. You don't have the right to meddle

So, we...
KTZ
CRINKLE
...have an agreement, right?
S ryou.
How about it?
.....
.....
KRUSTLE

We raid Yashiro's house at dawn tomorrow.
Boss...
I know you're all just hired hands. This isn't kid's play. We're gonna be fighting to kill. If you're scared, I suggest you leave by tonight
We all have nothing to lose.


Don't hold back, kids.
.....

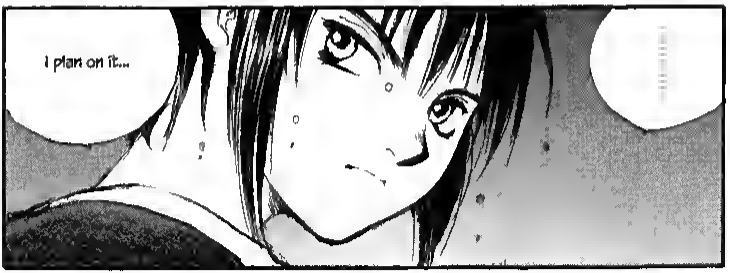
We'd rather...
Even if we live, we have nothing to look forward to.
... risk our lives for a fortune, compared to a life filled with nothing.

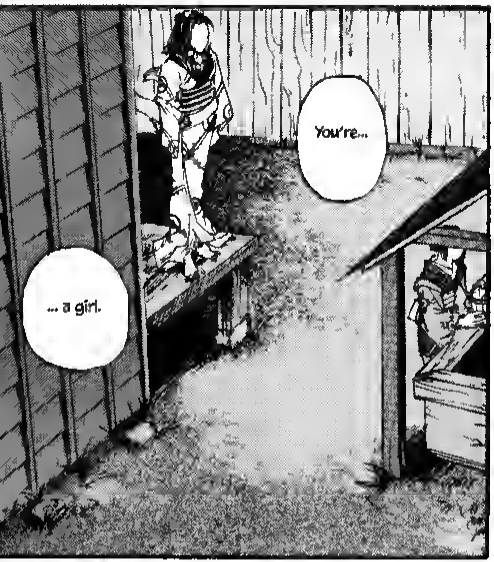

Three men unlock the gates at 4:30 a.m. to draw water from the well.

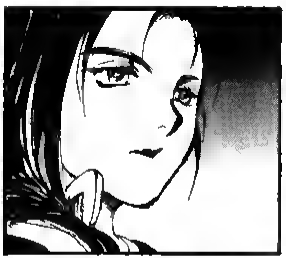
GARA GARA

Are you gonna fight, too?

SPLASH


I plan on it...


You're...
... a girl.

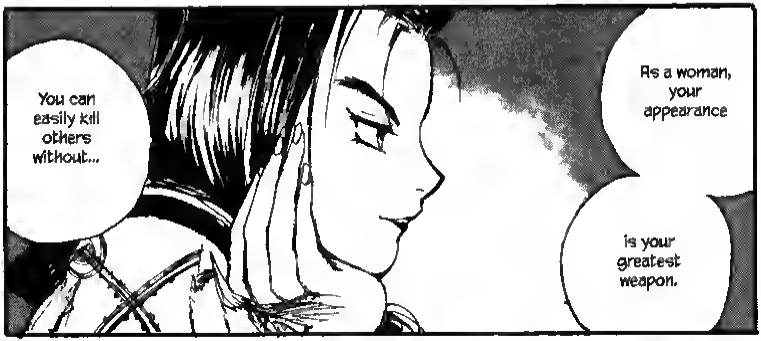


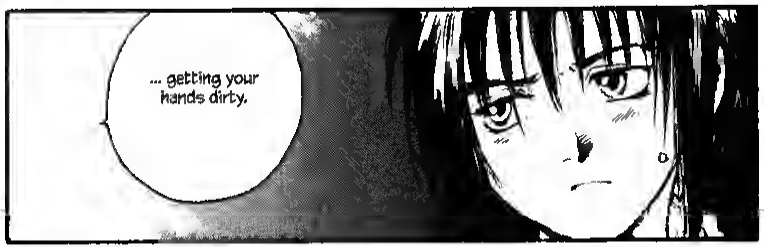
GRRR

I could see you were right away

.....
I don't care if you're a man or a woman.
It's just an observation.
I'm just curious, that's all.
So? Does it...
... matter to you?
.....
You've got a pretty face.
It's not an interesting story, trust me.

I don't care how you ended up as a drifter.
You just seem to be holding onto a grudge, that's all.
Well that ain't gonna help me eat.
SCRUB SCRUB
I'm interested in your current situation.
You're blessed with a pretty face.
Why you choose to live as a man instead of using your
God-given beauty is what I don't understand.


You can easily kill others without...
As a woman, your appearance
is your greatest weapon.


... getting your hands dirty.

Achievements?
You're a silly girl.
I'm interested in working for my own achievements.
You just have to play the part of the damsel in distress.
A stupid man will do the hard, dirty work.

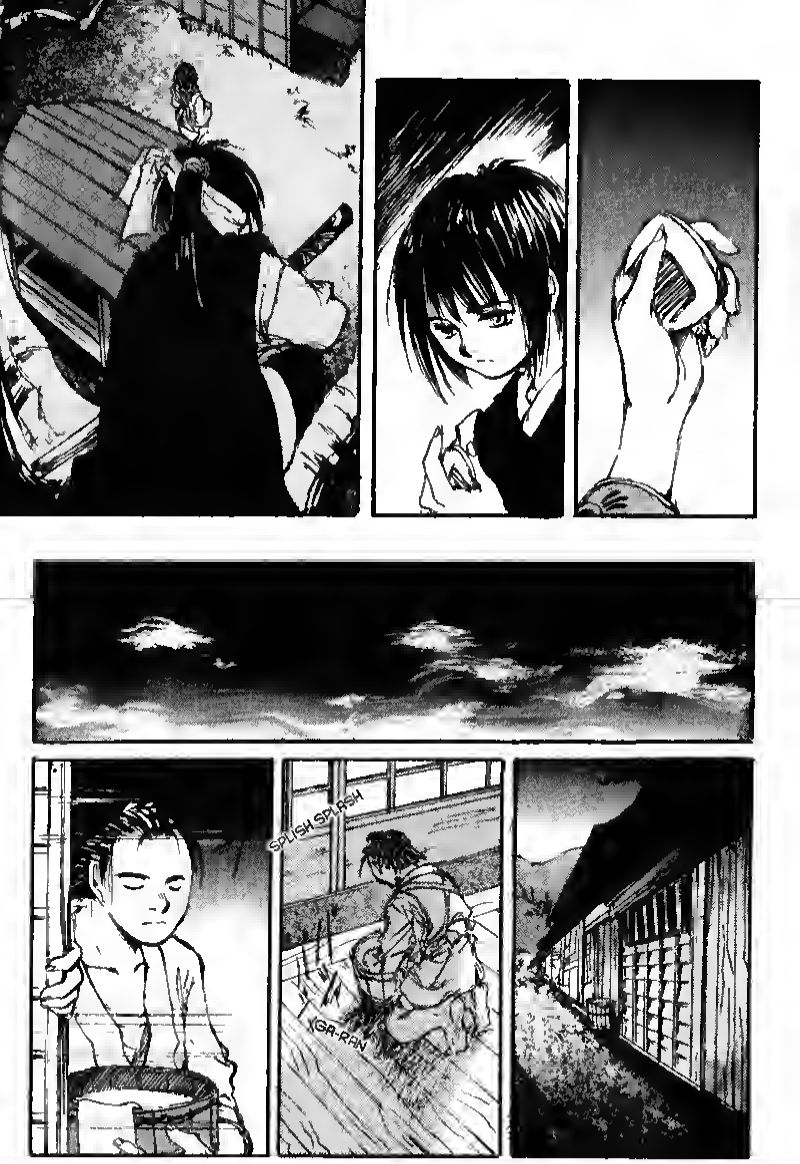
That's never occurred to me.
Everyone has a role to play.
The end result is the most important factor.
ZZT
You really are a strange girl.
Men take care of things with their fists and swords. Women have a different way of getting things done, too.
I don't plan on changing.
I've always defended myself on my own.
... than a man.
I was always taught to be stronger...

Have you ever...
... been in love with a man?
JARI
I just don't...
... understand you.
What?
Yes, I have.
He's dead.

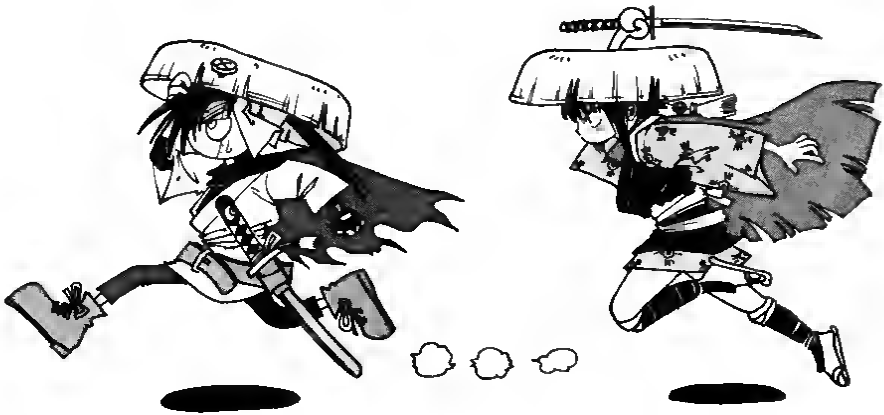
...they're still alive.
Sometimes, it's harder if...
At least comb your hair.
?
You're still a girl, after all...
SLIDE
Work hard tomorrow.
Uhm.

Are you leaving the family because of O-ko?
I don't...
... want to get married.
Ha! It's not like I ever really cared about you.
I'm sorry about this. I know this puts you in a difficult spot.

You can't go against our father's decision.
I'm also getting married off to some guy I could care less about. If I could trade places, I would.
You don't like Yashiro?
I refuse to...
... compromise.
I'll do anything...
... to be with my true love.
Good for you.

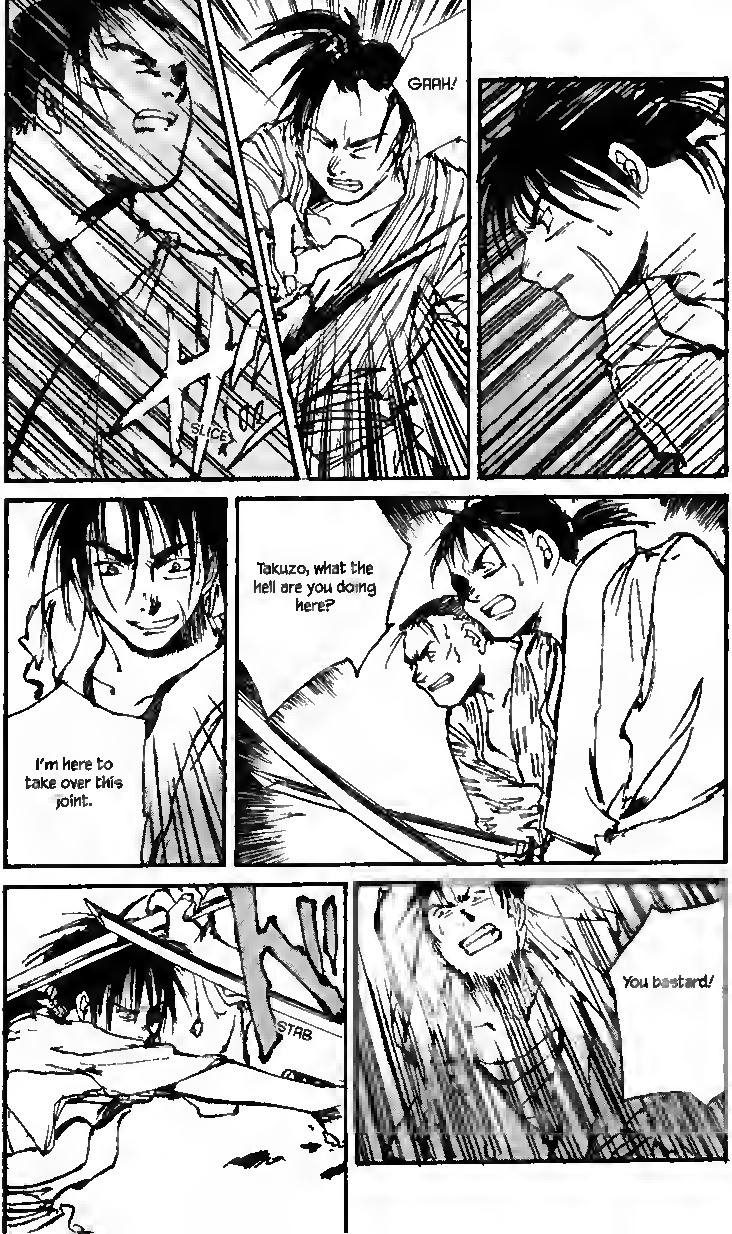

SPLISH SPLASH
KGA-RAN

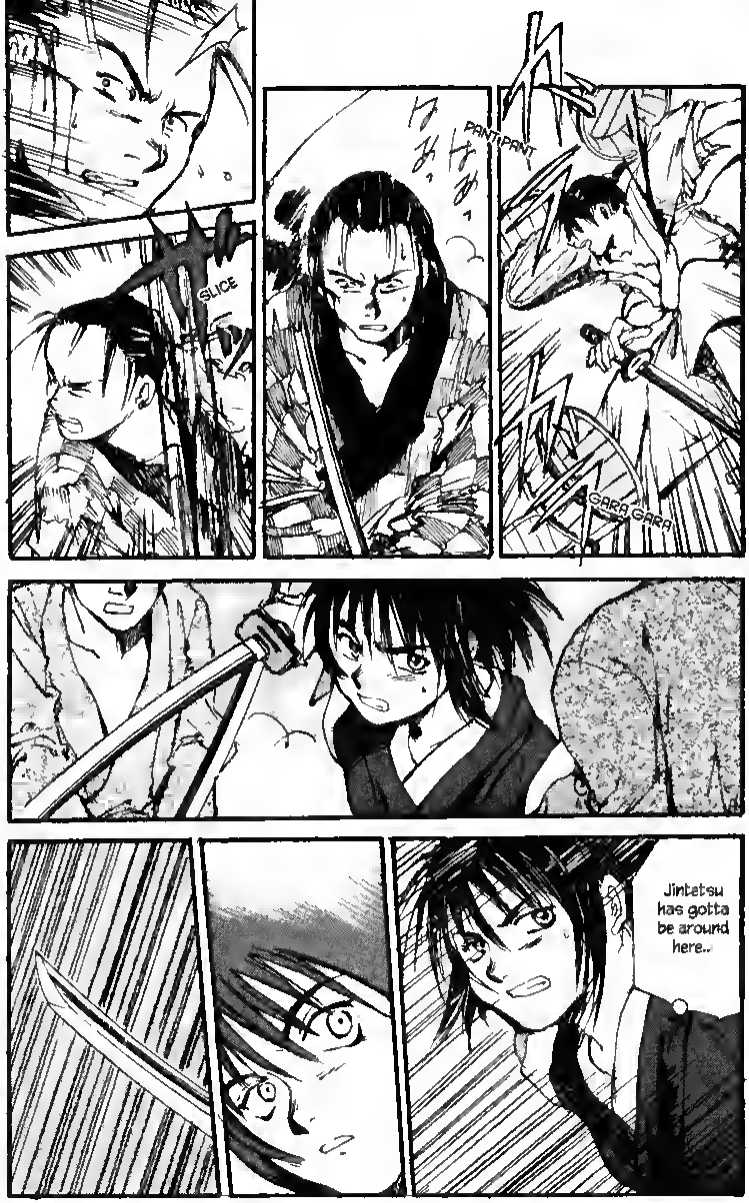
THE END OF CHAPTER 5, EPISODE 3



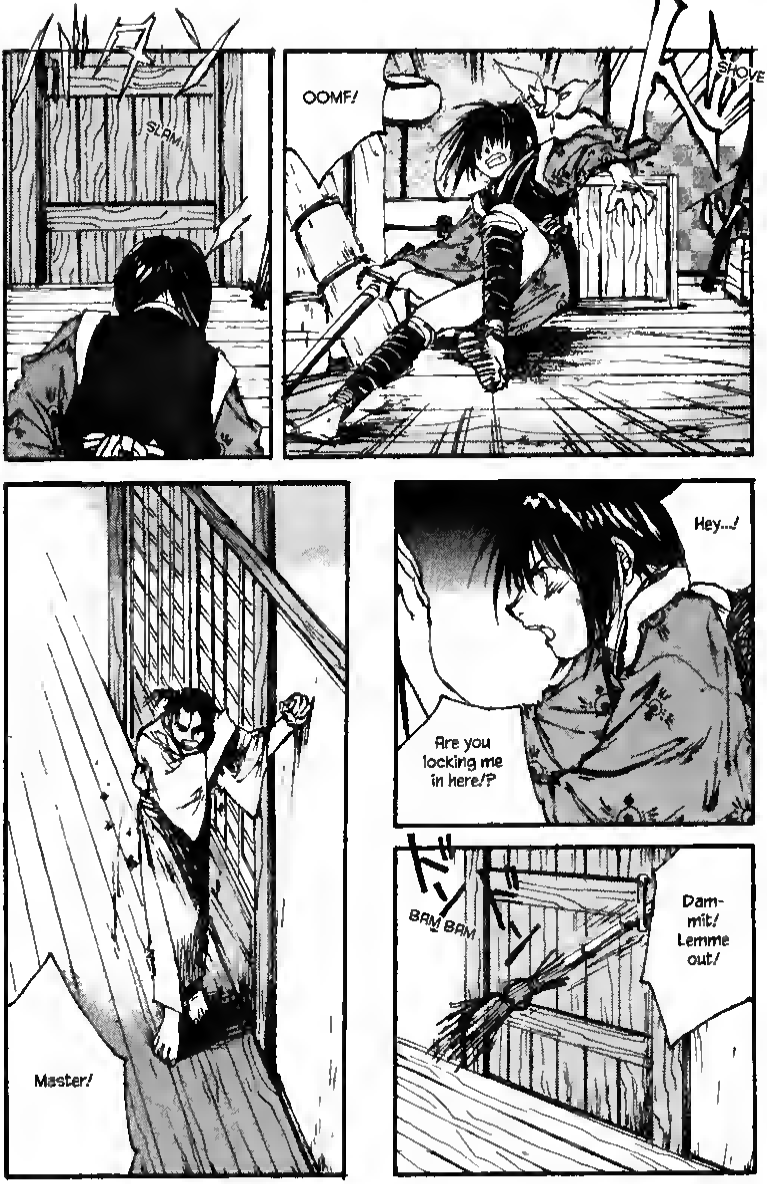
Chapter 8
第八幕
CRIMSON
あざみ どうじゃ
(薊の道者)
—第四景—
Episode 4

Uh...
GRIP
It's Taku-zo!
SLAM
What the hell...!


GAAH!
SLICE!
Takuzo, what the hell are you doing here?
I'm here to take over this joint.
STAB
You bastard!


SLICE
PAINT PAINT
GARA GARA
Jintetsu has gotta be around here..

OW!
WHOOSH
THUD
BASA
What the... Lemme go!
STOMP STOMP
Whoa!?
SHA

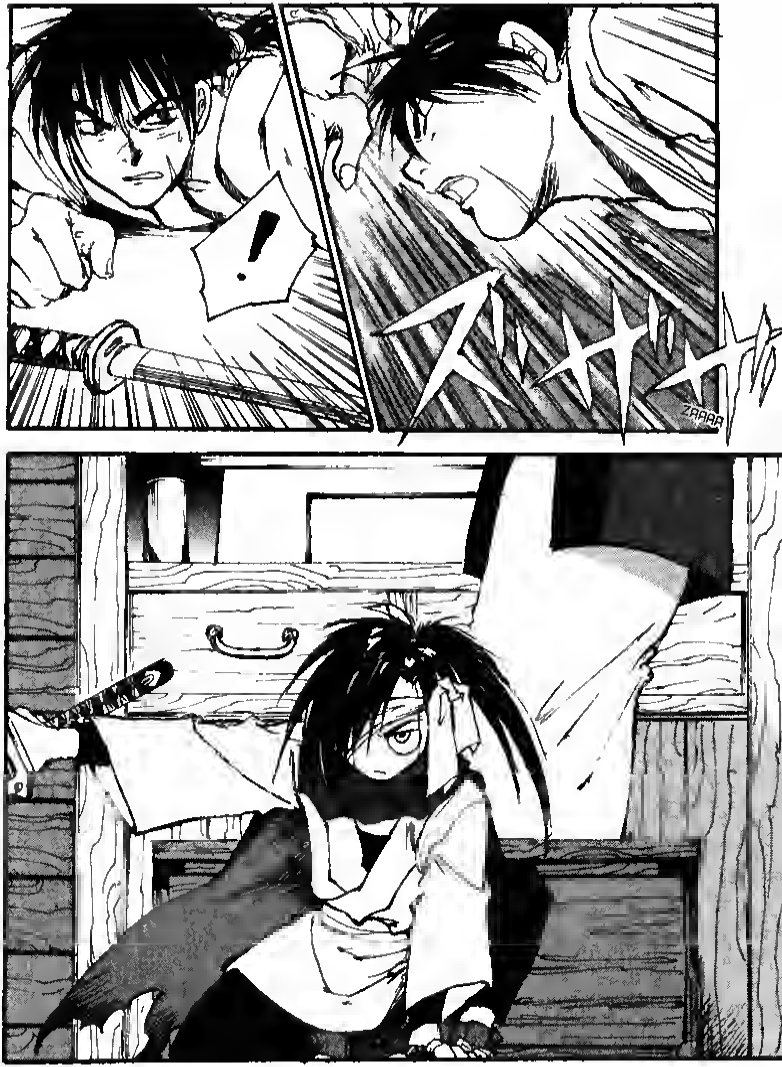

SLAM!
OOMF!
SHOVE
Hey...!
Are you locking me in here!?
BAM! BAM
Dam-mit! Lemme out!
Master!

Master/
Takuzo...

UMPH .
THRUST

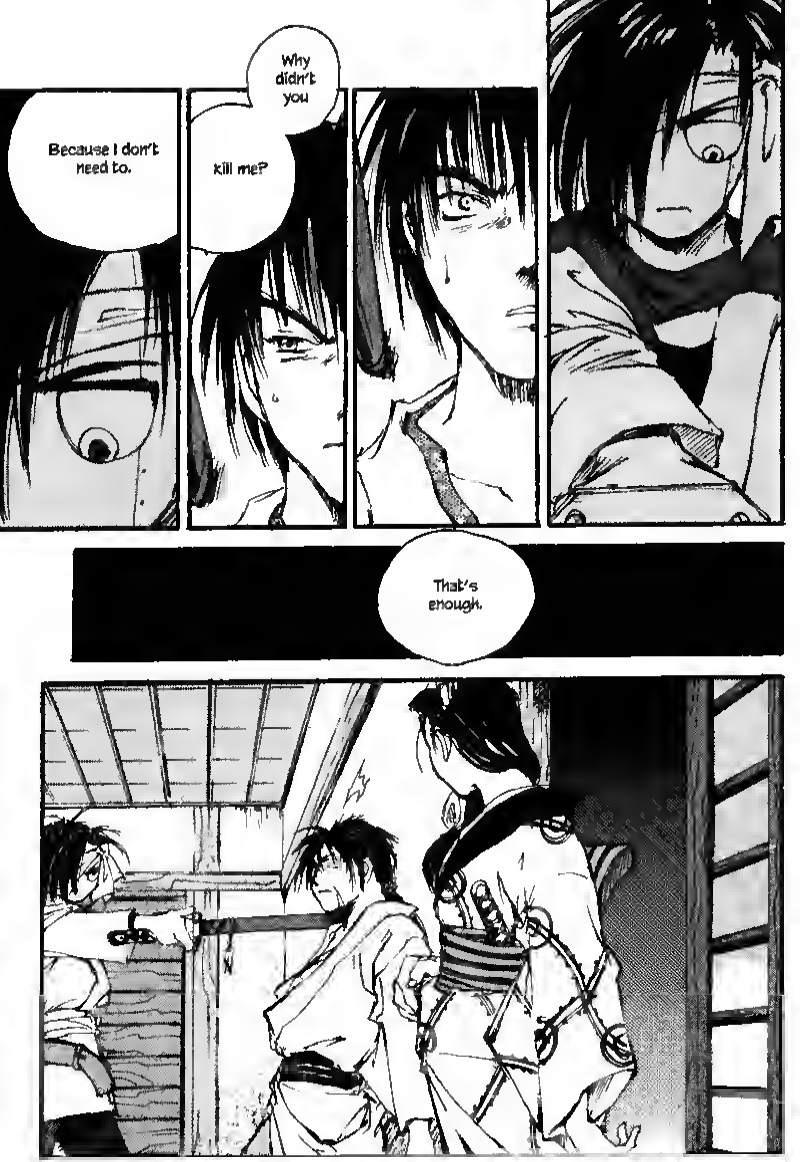
Yashiro!
I'm here for your head!
.....

What's holding you back?
CHHT
SHOVE


!
ZAARR

but not today...
Last time, I was taken by surprise,
CH-HT
You're...
... Jintetsu of Steel!
Takuzo!
CLANG
I'm aware of that, bastard!
You know O-en's just using you

WHOOSH
SLAM
BASH

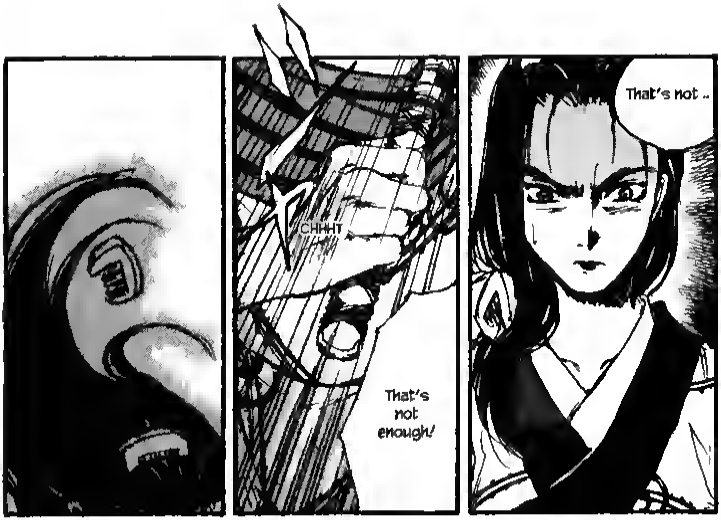

Because I don't need to.
Why didn't you kill me?
That's enough.

O-en...
.....
It's been a long time, Yashiro.
I was surprised that you remembered me.

Why didn't you..
just send an assassin
and kill me?
Your gang's ben wiped out I got my revenge.
I planned it all. What are you gonna do about it?
Kill me on the spot?
Say something!
HUFF
.....!

I've been ready to die.
Go ahead. Slice me in half.
...because I have the same face...
ZAS
Are you gonna tell me that you can't kill a defense less woman?
Or is it...
...be my sister, O-ko?

O-en...
I'm sorry
If you're not gonna kill me, ...
... then I'll kill you!


That's not ..
CHHH
That's not enough!

I know you could have...
Why didn't you step away?

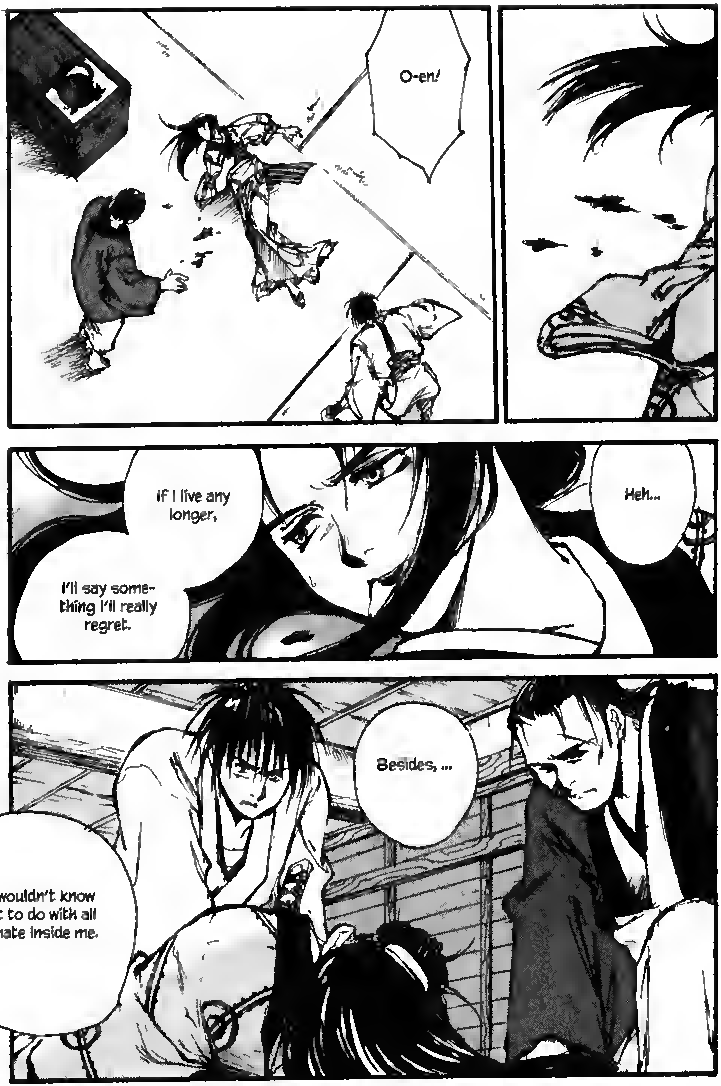
It's all my fault. I ruined your and your sister's life.
... wanna take my life, then you can have it.
If you...

That way, I could have...
... peacefully died while still hating you...

Why are you like that?
You did nothing wrong.
In fact, you could say that I had a grudge on you for no good reason.

You're right. I just wanted to hate somebody.
It was easier to keep living that way
I don't wanna hear remorse from you
If you would have just told me...
.. ten years ago what I really needed to hear..

O-en!


O-en!
Heh...
If I live any longer,
I'll say something I'll really regret.
Besides, ...
... I wouldn't know what to do with all the hate inside me.

Maybe I'll Finally Find peace...

Let me look at your wound.
I don't think she hit my organs.
I won't die.
Master...
Master...

Aren't you gonna kill me?
Master!
When you leave town, you should stop by her grave and burn some incense in her memory.
I'm going to take her body to the temple at the edge of town.
CLATTER

Where are you headed?
No place in particular.
BASAH
ZA
.....
This is the money O-en-san gave me to have me spare you.
You should take it.
Takuzo-san...

Where are you going?
.....
I go wherever the wind or my mind tell me to go. I'm a drifter.
ZZT ZZT

You're still here.
Hey!
Ma... Makoto!
Next time, it'll be the fight to the death.
Don't worry. I'm not gonna kill you today.
That's fine.
By the way...

Women seem weak, but..
... they're really strong.
I see.
...if you wanna pay your respects to O-en's grave, Takuzo is still there.
.....
Next time, I'll get you!
BASAH
They can also seem strong, but have weaknesses.
Right?
ZZT ZZT

I get the feeling that she's following us.

Jintetsu, I was thinking that...
...we should have kept some of the money...?
.....
THE END OF CHAPTER 8

Have you heard about the phantom of the Gokumon Pass?
What is it?
If you go south on this Uraniwakko Trail towards the Reiheishi Trail, you'll come across the Gokumon Pass.
Really?
Recently, an old ghost of a tsujikiri is rumored to attack travelers.
Only samurais and toseinins get killed, always during a full moon.
SLURP
The head is missing from the body. What a messed-up story!
CLINK
SPLAT

Chapter.9
第九幕
MASK
(罪人の仮面)
第一景

I'm sure you don't.
It was about 10 years ago. A tsujikiri was tortured...
...along that pass.
I wonder why a ghost popped up in the area all of a sudden?
Do you know how the Gokumon Pass got its name?

Are you a traveler?
It's not just a rumor! People have died.
I can't postpone my travels based on a simple rumor.
Take my advice. If you go that way, you'll still be on the road after dark.
I need to take the Rei-keiski Trail to get to the Chuyama Trail.
Haven't you heard about the Gokumon Pass?

Why don't you find lodging for the night and leave tomorrow morning?
Are you in a hurry?
I'm a drifter,
but I don't wanna change my plans once it's been decided.
He's wearing a steel mask...
RUSTLE
The phantom of the Gokumon Pass?

How many months...
CHIRP
... have I been following him?

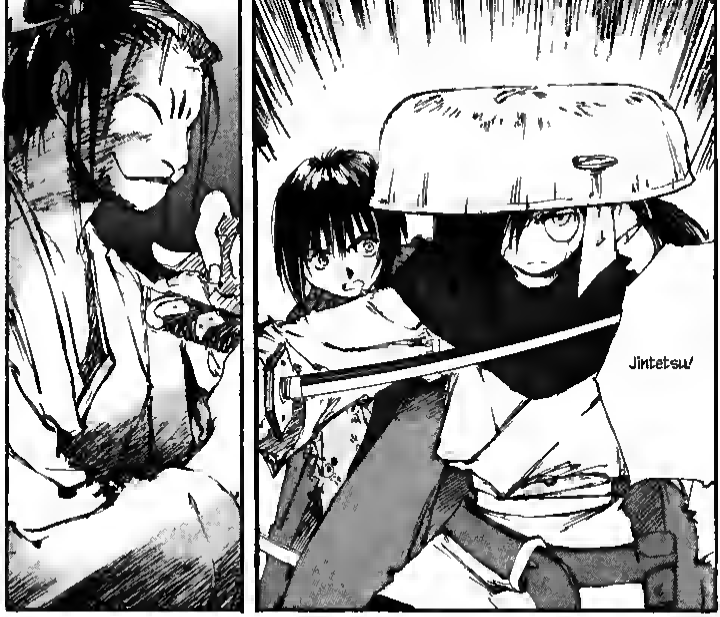
What am I waiting for?
I'm sure I can find some way to kill him...

I am the only daughter of the Akagi family
Until I met Jintetsu, I have never been bested by a man of my own age.
Jintetsu is the sworn enemy of the Akagi family. He deserves no sympathy...
I want to beat him in a fair fight.
It's not that I just want to kill him to avenge my family...
RUSTLE
This is also for my own pride.

Who's there!

!
WOOSH
This must be the phantom of Gokumon Pass...
ZZT
He's...
...fast!

FWOOSH
CLANG

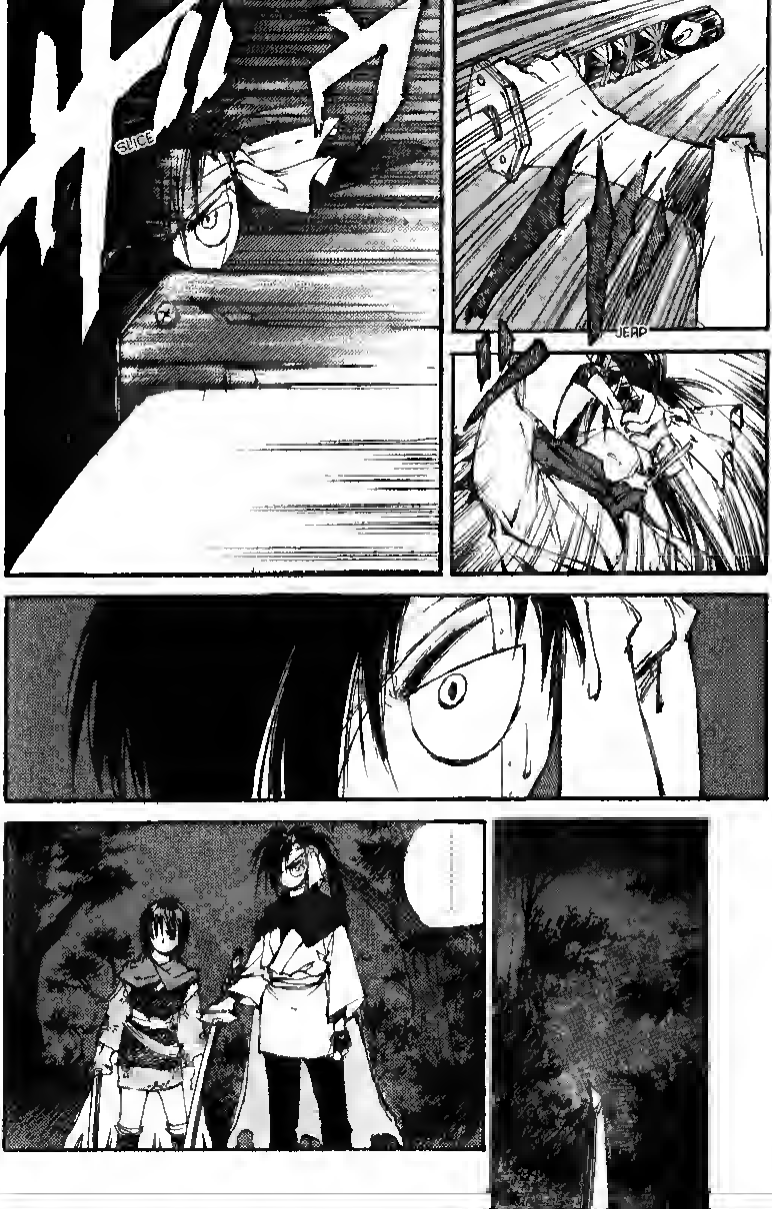

Jintetsu!

It's weird for a ghost to be using a sword...
Who the hell are you?

CHIT

KA-CHAK
!
ZAAA
FWOOSH
!

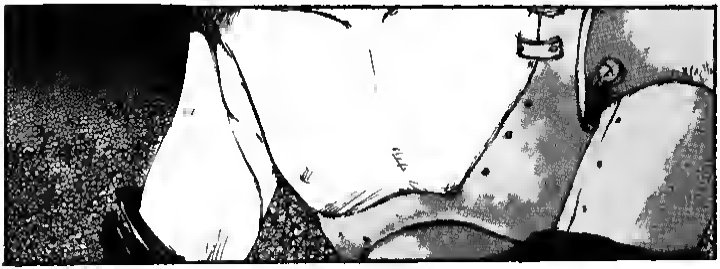
THUD
Where did he go?
Jintetsu!


SLICE
JERP

He disappeared?
It seems like it, but ..
.. it's dark, and he's quick.
You should attend...
... to your wound.
THROB

...
DOP
I was interested in the ghost of Gokumon Pass.
I wasn't able to find out who he was...
Who he was?
If he's got a body, then he's not a ghost.
Just before he disappeared, I could feel my sword hit him.
GOSO
Why do you keep helping me?
No matter how much I owe you, I'm not gonna change my mind.

He might be a robber pretending to be a ghost. I doubt we'll see him again tonight



I was brought back to life by a man.
My body is half flesh, half machine.
Whoa...
Your body...

Lemme tell you something.
Jintetsu can't talk. I talk for him.
?
I'm a meito named Haganemaru.
I used to be a human, but I've been made into...
... a sword by the same man that brought Jintetsu back to life. It's a long story.
Jintetsu can no longer talk, but I know what he's thinking, so I talk for him.
... we're not regular human beings.
Take it easy on us, willya?
...
? ?
I don't care if you don't understand.
Just..
ZZT

... is Jintetsu, really?
Who the hell..
Not just that...
I owe him yet again...
I haven't been able to make a move.
He's just helped me time and time again...
Are you messin' with me?
It's almost dawn. We gotta get moving.

GRAB
GRRR
I'm talkin' 'bout the so-called ghost.
I don't think he's a thief
The way he fights...
He's a trained swordsman.

ZZZ
Does your wound hurt?
Jintetsu?
GARAN
Shima-goya Inn
It was deeper than you expected, huh.
Instead of sleeping outside, we should find an inn and relax.
I'm sorry
Our inn's full.

I'm sure you already know.
Don't bother.
I'll look elsewhere.
The last few days, all lodging in town's been
filled with spineless samurais and toseinins.
When the moon is bright, the ghost appears.
Dammit...
Nobody has any vacancies..
.....
What? Am I wrong?
How many nights have you been here?
How dare you call us spineless!
I think it's too convenient that a ghost of a dead tsujikiri has...
... started to appear all of a sudden.

THUD
STAGGER
You have a fever, kid/ Dammit/
Sometimes, it sucks to be a sword/
Hey, Jintetsu/
.....
I can't let him die before I get my revenge/
I do owe the creep, after all...
I have no choice.
ZZT
.....
He must be hurt pretty badly.
It looked kinda serious...

Excuse me.
Are you all right, sir?

.....

THE END OF CHAPTER 9, EPISODE 1

Chapter 9
第九幕
MASK
つみびと
(罪人の仮面)
—第二景—
Episode 2

.....
Is anything wrong?
He's wearing a steel mask...
If you don't mind...
... you can sleep in the shed.
I'm just injured and feeling feverish.
I was looking for a place to rest tonight...
That's too bad. This town isn't usually this crowded.

I don't think it's too much trouble for you to sleep in the shed.
After all, you're injured, right?
I can't be a bother to a nice young lady like you.
That's all right.
It's over there. It's not very clean, but....
People don't go to the shed very often.
I don't want the store employees getting the wrong idea.
You're going to have to be quiet.

Oh no! You've been too kind already.
I can take care of this myself, thank you.

You should treat your wound.
Do you need my help?

You may not be able to get comfortable here, but...
.. there's an old straw mat. Feel free to use it.

Thank you for everything, ma'am.

I have to return to the shop.
I was running errands when I found you.

Excuse me.
Sure

My name is Mizuha.
I'm the adopted daughter of the shopkeeper.
Are you still in pain?
The rumors of the ghost must have reduced travelers...
... from Jyoshu.

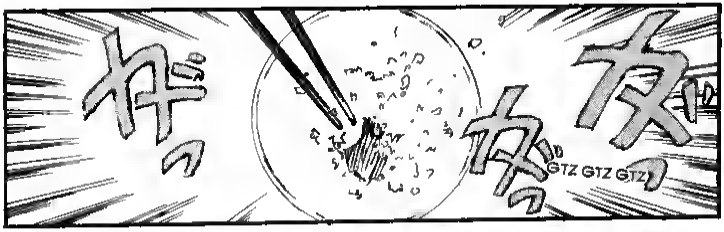
That was a damn costly price we had to pay.
Oh well, it's over now. We're carefree drifters. We can't stress over the past.
We even found a decent place to relax!
We lucked out.
CHIRP CHIRRP
CLATTER
How are you feeling?
These are just leftovers from the store.
.....

Most katagi women are afraid of toseinin.
This is just unusual.
What's wrong?
... you're injured, and you're in no shape to hurt anyone.
Usually, I would be afraid, but...
They didn't have children, so they were very good.
My parents passed away, so I was adopted by my distant relatives.
That's right
You said you were adopted into this family.

He wants to become a samurai?
I don't know if he'll be able to make it.
... to both ma and my brother.
He's in Edo right now as a wakato.
He said he'll send for me once he becomes one.
He seems to be very busy
I have not seen him in a long time.

Thank you for your kindness.
BOW

Oh, please begin eating before ...
...the tea gets cold.


GTZ GTZ GTZ

You have a funny way of eating.
I hope you don't mind me asking...

SLURP

.....
Don't you think that creates more unwanted attention?
It's not that I don't remove my mask,
but that I can't.
I have a big scar on my face, so I hide it with the mask.
Do you ever...
... remove your mask?
My past is not fit to tell to a katagi woman.
This mask is the price to pay for my past...

I'm gonna try one more time!
Thank you! Come back anytime!

チャリーン
TINK
Crap! I lost again!

HINAYA RESTAURANT
HINAYA RESTAURANT
Mizuha, can I get some tea?
Right away, sir!
I drop by every day.
You come here to see Mizuha.
You see villagers in here as well as the travelers.
SLURP
SLURP
.....

Yes, ma'am.
Mizuha, can you take care of the bill?

I'd bet she never touched a sword in her life...
Look at those delicate hands.
She looks like a regular girl...
I guess that's normal.
Normal, eh ..

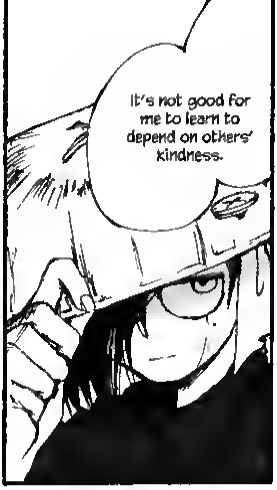
At least comb your hair
You're still a girl, after all ..
I bought this in Edo. You wanted something like this, right?
Oh
... would I have been like her?
If I was born as a normal city girl ..

I have pride as the only daughter of the Akagi family.
Thinking like this isn't right for me.
Thank you very much!
Thanks.
TINK
BASAH

Did you hear that a wealthy zeniya in Echigo called Ikei was murdered?
So, you're from Edo?
Ikei was murdered by a wakato of a shogun's vassal that had owed him money.
The man still hasn't been caught.
Excuse me...
Do you know the name of the...
shogun's vassal?

I don't remember the name. Sorry.
Oh...
I'm feeling better, so I should leave.
You've been too kind.
You're leaving?
It's not healthy to travel at night.
You should rest for another day
Besides...
I just don't wanna cause you any problems with your family.
I appreciate your concern.

... and leave tomorrow morning.
You should rest tonight...
Please.


It's not good for me to learn to depend on others' kindness.

PASAH

Why? What's going on?
Edo? No.

It's nothing.
I'm sorry

... mind me asking...
TRAP
Did you hear of any news from Edo during your travels?

Uhm...
If you don't ..

Someone! Open the door!
BAM BAM
HINAYA RESTAURANT
HINAYA RESTAURANT
BAM BAM
What's this about?!
He's been hurt!
He's the son of the Kamedaya family.
Whoa!
THUD

Go get a doctor!
I'll go.

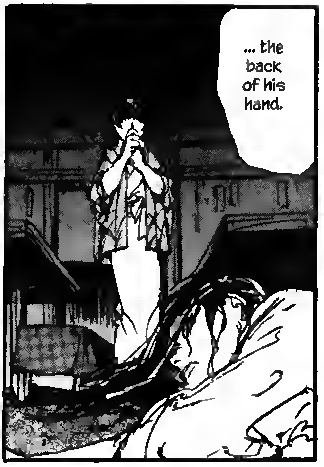
I just saw...
... the phantom of Gokumon Pass.
What?!

It wasn't a ghost...
He had a scar of a crescent on ...

What's going on?
Where's Kamedaya-san?

The doctor's here!
He's not breathing!

Huh?


... the back of his hand.

My brother...
That's impossible!
He's dead!
That can't be..
A crescent scar...
My brother's in Edo to complete his training, but...
.. a crescent scar can't be that common...
Ihei was murdered by...

I haven't heard from my brother in a while...
Could that be...

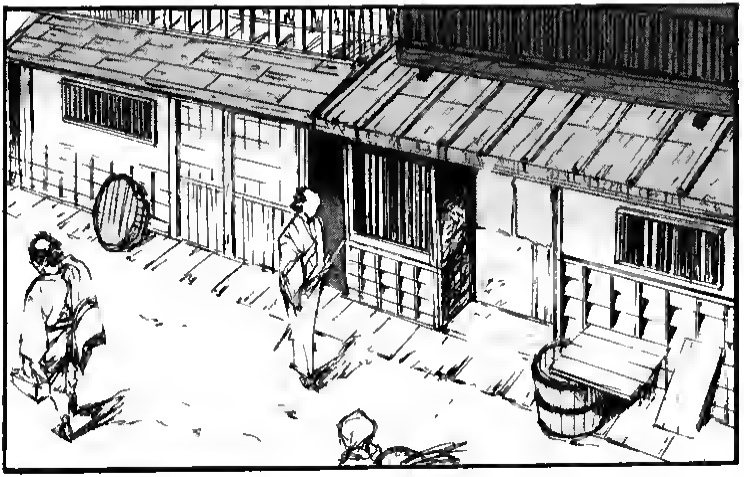
GA-TAN!

I hear commotion coming from the main house.
It's late.

I was wondering if I could ask you to do me a favor...
... before you leave town tomorrow morning.
Please excuse me for bothering you so late.
I was wondering if you could discover
the identity of the phantom of Gokumon Pass.

THE END OF CHAPTER 9, EPISODE 2

Chapter 9
第九幕
MASK
つみびと
(罪人の仮面)
—第三景—



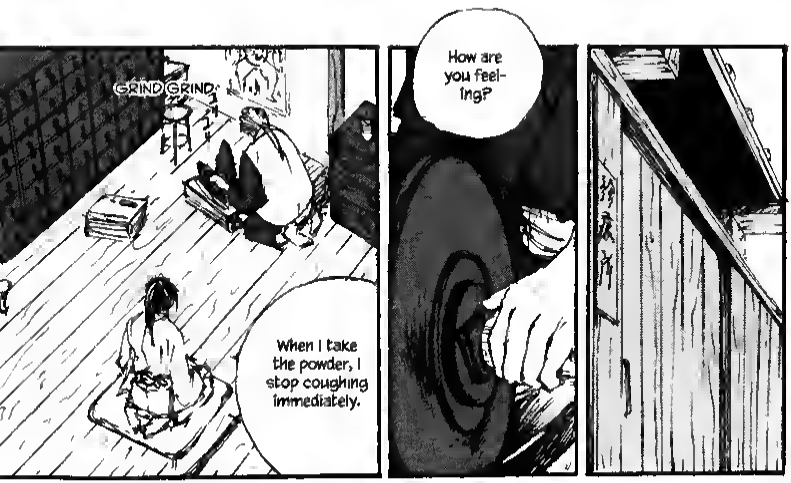
Thank you, Master Tsukioka, for all your hard work.

There are plenty of other money-lenders that would love to take over this place.

I'd like to retire and have someone take over the clan, but...
... it's hard to find a man with enough skill to run this operation.

I'm just your guest.
I'm only repaying you for looking after my health, Master Nikichi
CHUCKLE
Thanks to your assistance, I think I can live a little while longer.
... you did not fight like a sick man.
During the showdown with the Risuke family...
It's not luxurious, but please feel free to remain here until you are well.
Should I send one of my men to get you more medicine?
I'll go get it myself.
KOFF KOFF
Excuse me! The smoke must be bothering you.

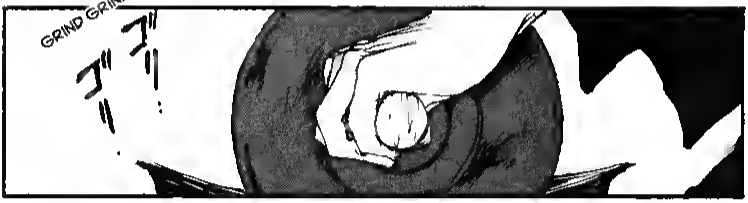
He coughed up blood.
He probably has consumption.
SPLASH SPLASH
CREAK
PA-TAN
He's so pale, and he wanders off at night.
He creeps me out.
SPLASH SPLASH
I know that ronin comes from Edo, but I know people don't know much about him.
He doesn't talk much, and he stays in his room all day.
Our clan is safe, thanks to him.
ZZT
ZZT
He's strong, though.


GRIND GRIND
When I take the powder, I stop coughing immediately.
How are you feeling?

When I'm out of medication, I get a strange headache that lasts for days.
However, my mind becomes hazy and I often can't remember what happened...

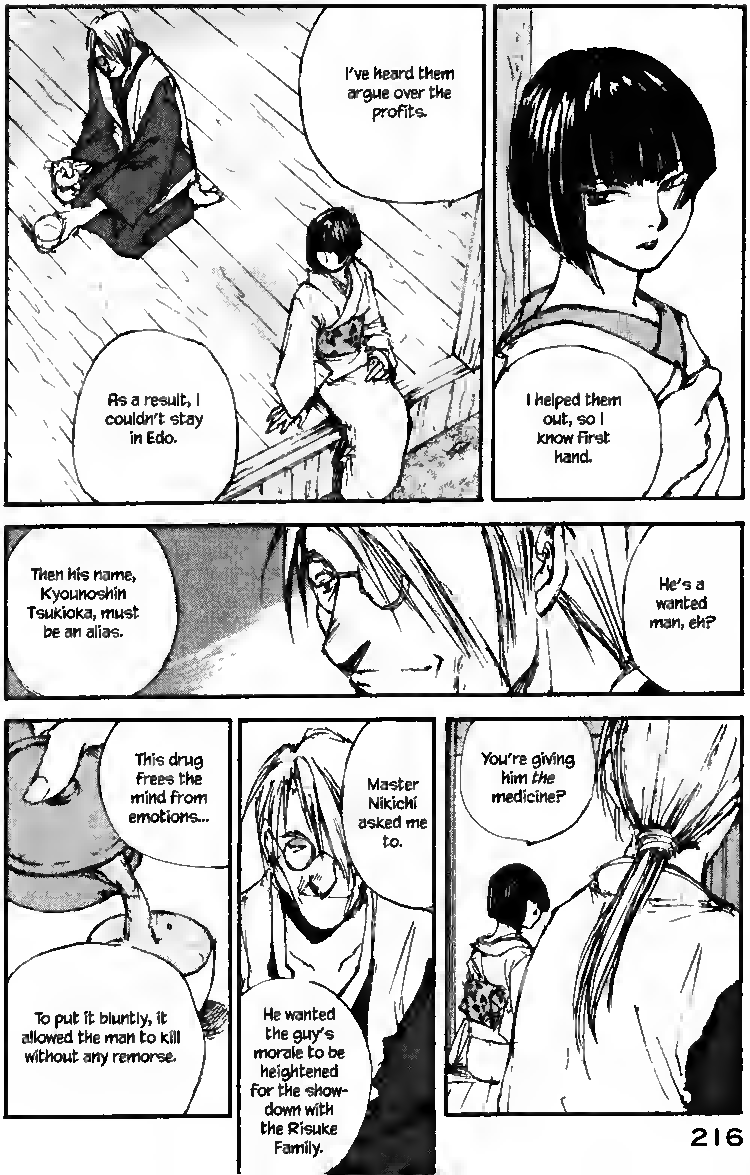
My coughing stops, but I don't feel any better.
What are you giving me?
Please tell me more.

I can't sleep at night...
... when the moon is bright.
It's a tonic. It's very hard to find.
It can heighten the emotions, so it may interfere with your memory.


GRIND GRIND
ゴリ
ゴリ

Call me Mako.
A shipment arrived from Nagasaki.
Did your patient leave?
Ma-fon!

Your patient...
In Edo.
He's the bodyguard of the Nikichi gang, right? I've met him befo-
He was being pursued when I told him about a secret road that by-passes the checkpoint.
Being pursued?
Did you hear about Ikei, the zeniya that was murdered in Edo?
I believe he's innocent.
The samurai that he was working under...
...was involved in an illegal smuggling ring with Ikei.


I've heard them argue over the profits.
As a result, I couldn't stay in Edo.
I helped them out, so I know first hand.
Then his name, Kyounoshin Tsukioka, must be an alias.
He's a wanted man, eh?
This drug frees the mind from emotions...
To put it bluntly, it allowed the man to kill without any remorse.
Master Nikichi asked me to.
He wanted the guy's morale to be heightened for the showdown with the Risuke Family.
You're giving him the medicine?

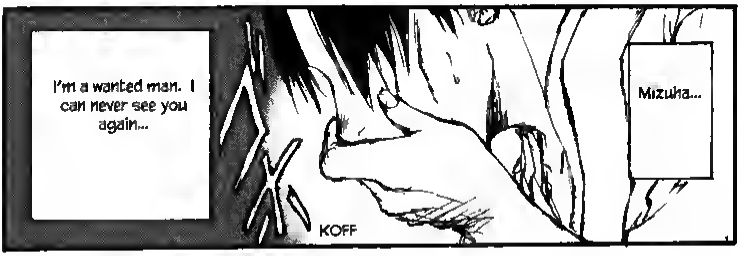
He may be a good swordsman, but that can be learned.
Have a drink.
In this world, your fighting skills mean nothing unless you can kill with it. He had the skill, but not the heart to kill.
After all, he'd be useless otherwise.
If he wants to stay alive, he'll need the drug, even if it's addictive
You mean very addictive.
Are you sure? I mean, he's not going to last much longer...
Master Nikichi will dispose of him after the showdown with the Shinzou family.
He can't take care of a sick man forever.
How is the tea?
I hope your hands and feet don't get numb afterwards.
After all, I did help him once...
That's quite sad.

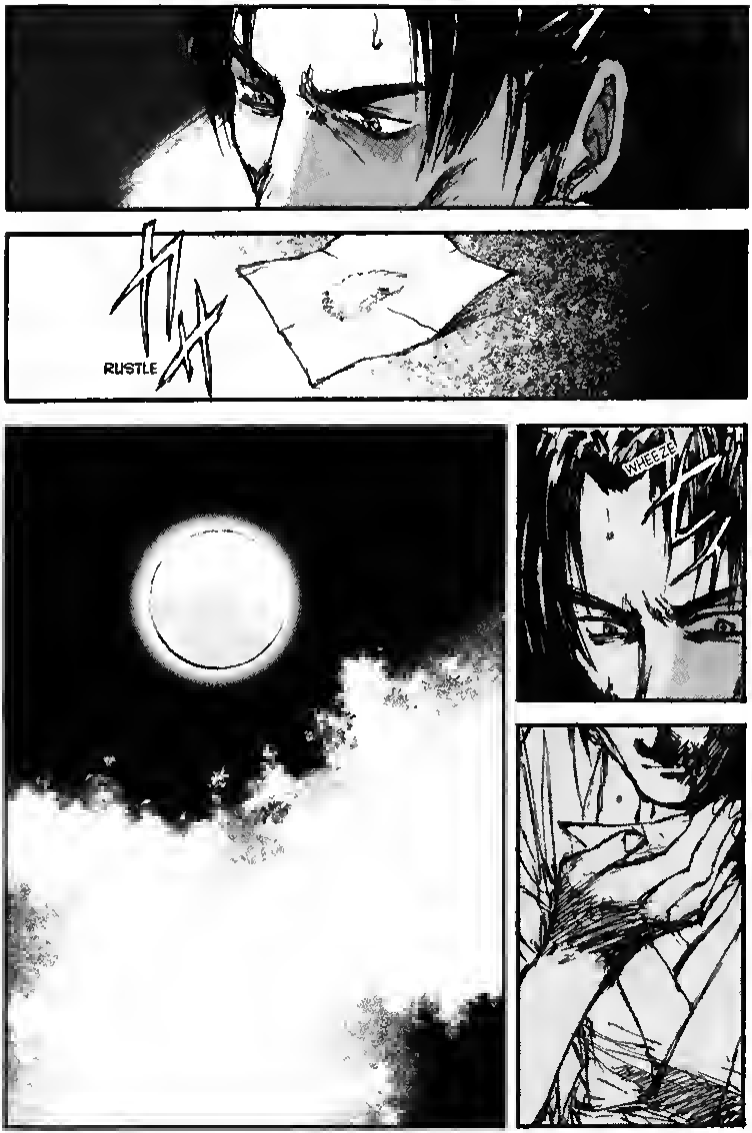
You've dragged the Kimura family name in the dirt!
I don't know what you're talking about!
Shut up! You killed him because you owe him money!
There's even an IOU!
When I went to the back-yard, Lord Ihei was...
Sir, I swear it wasn't me!

Yaichiro, Ikei's murderer, escaped his cell!
Find him! Circulate flyers right away!
What a joke..
KOFF
I arrived in Edo with a dream of becoming a samurai.
However, all I found were greedy scums calling themselves samurais.

KOFF KOFF

I'm looking forward to living with you again.
I'm so proud of you!


I'm a wanted man. I can never see you again...
KOFF
Mizuha...


RUSTLE
WHEEZE

A villager was killed!
We have to do something!

They heard the latest rumor.
All the travelers in town have disappeared.
This is going to make travelers stay away and hurt our businesses even more.

Did he have a scar on his hand?
I didn't take a good look, since I sent him away.

A few days ago, a creepy toseimin ...
...with a mask came to my inn.

I never believed that it was a ghost.
It's probably some drifter living around here.

This isn't a good time to linger.
I should leave before I'm wrongly accused.
Do you think he's still around here?
Well, Jin-tetsu does look kinda creepy.
Huff!
BASAH

BASAH

Thank you for doing this for me.
I just need you to see if he has a scar on the back of his right hand.

It's the least I can do for your help.
Besides...

I'll be fine.
I recovered to the point where I can use my sword.

How is your injury?
Gail

... what will you do if your brother is...
.. the phantom like you suspect?
I don't think it's him.
If it is, then I'm sure something horrible happened to him.
I will convince my brother to turn himself in, and ..
... I will leave this town and do what I can for my brother.
I can't believe that my kind brother is a murderer.
I don't think he's capable.

Jintetsu!
ZZT
ZZT ZZT
Makoto...
He might kill you this time.
Why are you here?

I can't have you dyin' on me.
I'm gonna be the one to kill you.

You were eaves-drop-ping?
I have to return a katagi's kindness.

ZZZ

I won't die so easily.

THE END OF CHAPTER 9, EPISODE 3

Chapter 9

第九幕

MASK

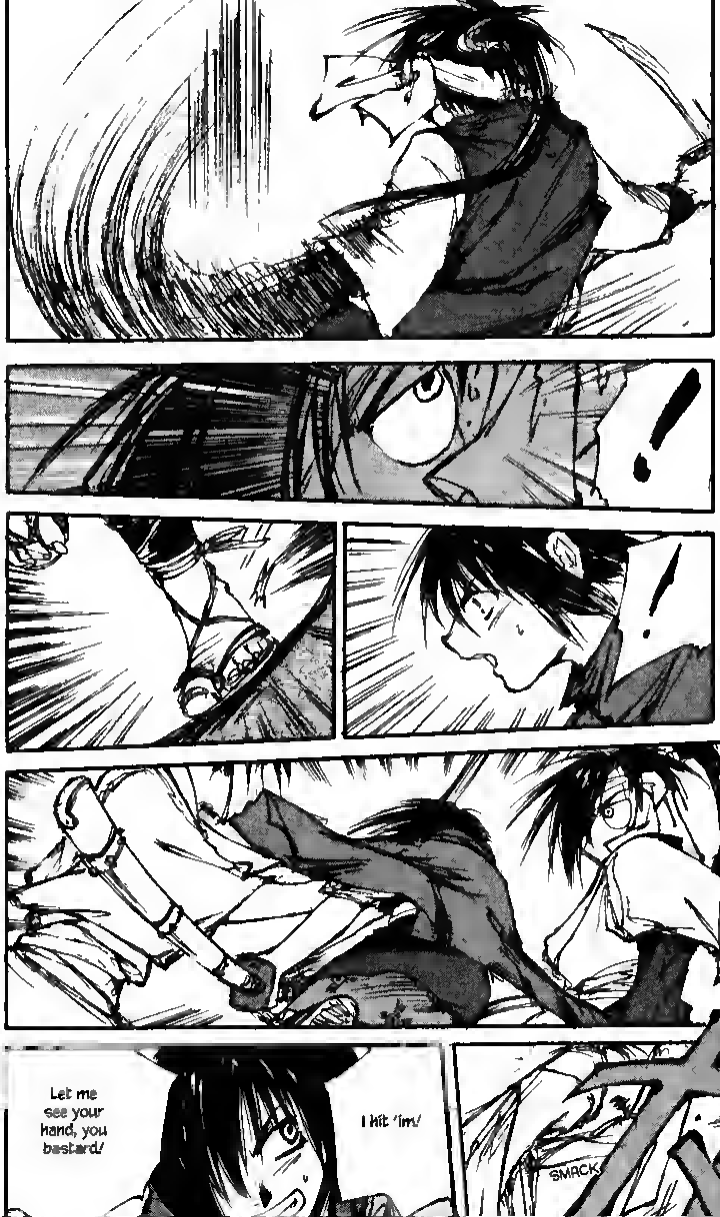
(罪人の仮面)

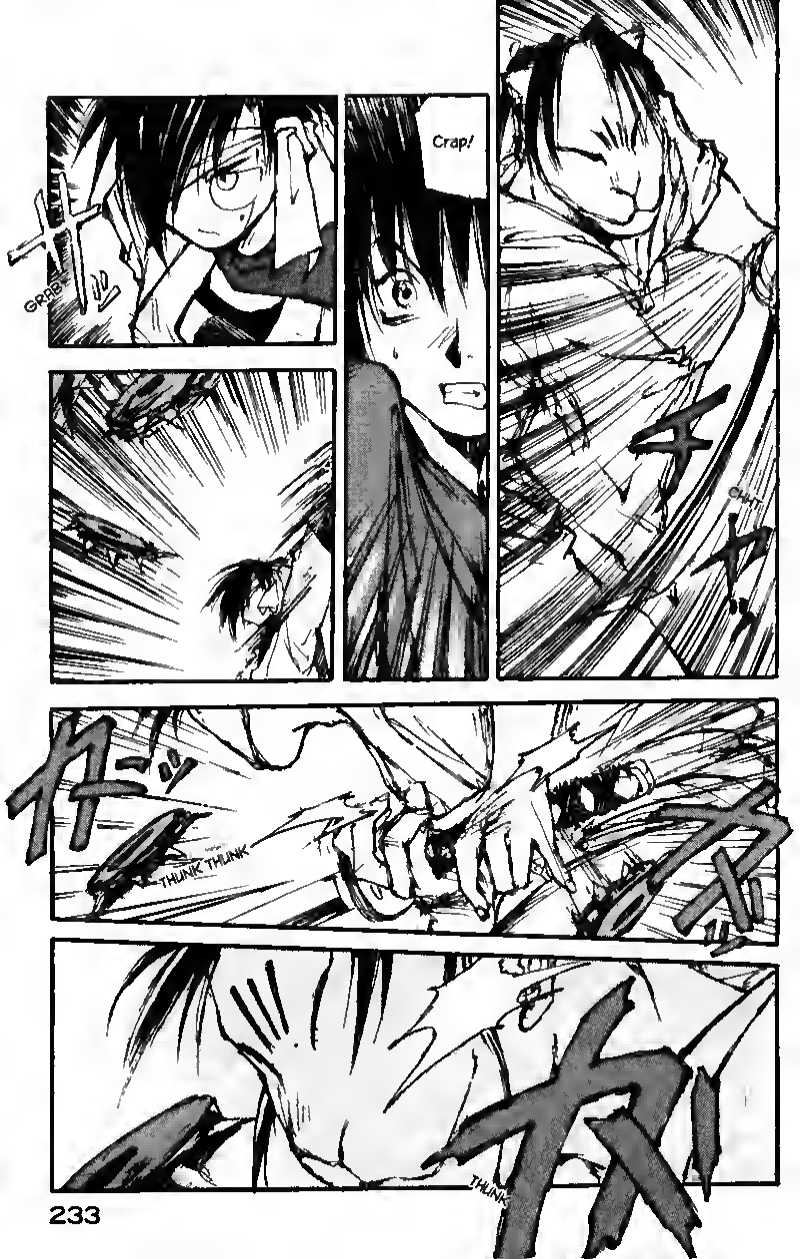
—第四景—

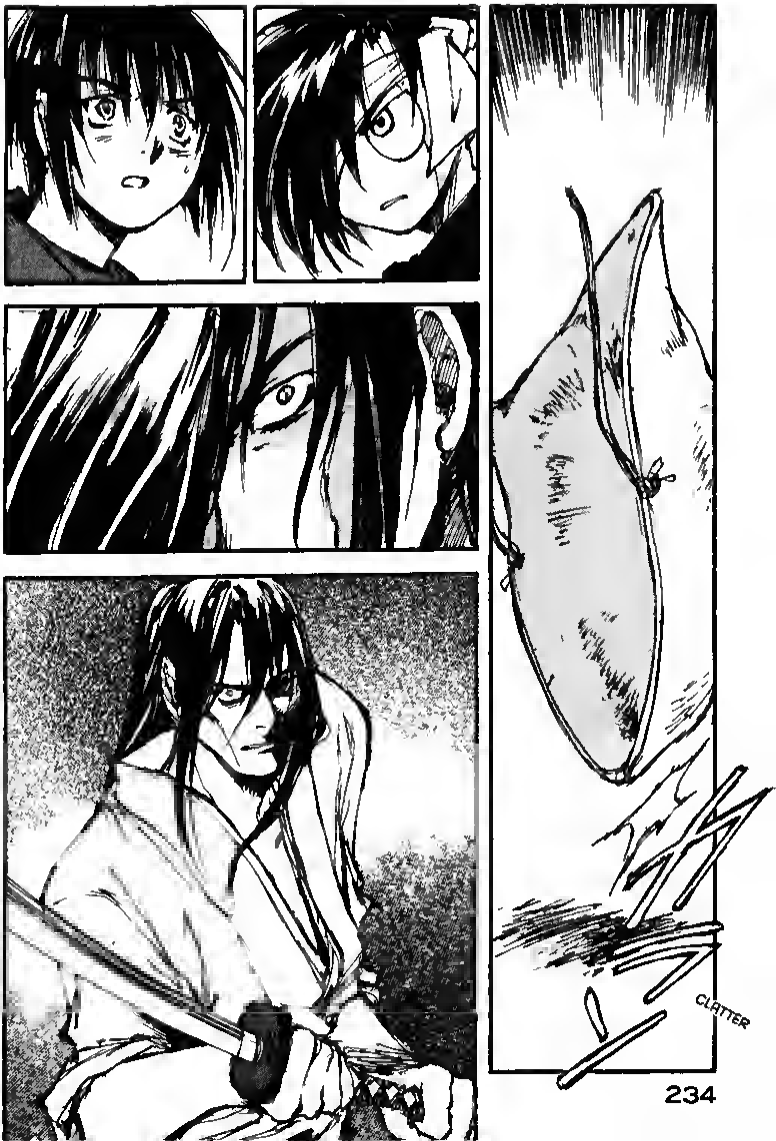
Episode 4

See, ghosts don't have legs.
I'm not gonna use the blade until I know who he is.

WHOOSH
He didn't disap-pear!
He's just hiding in the shadows
To your left!
SHHHHT.
CLANG

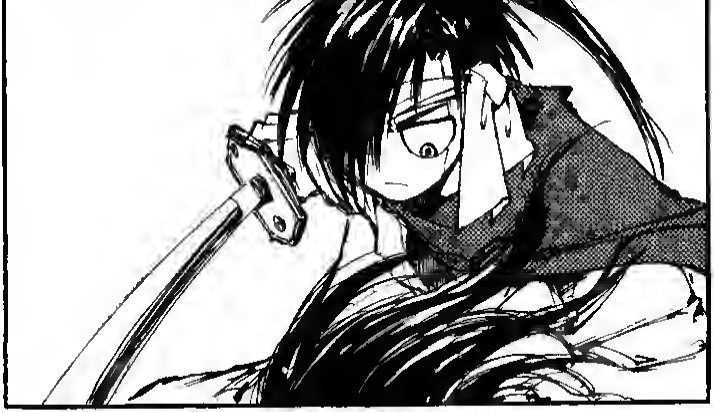

!
!
Let me see your hand, you bastard!
I hit 'im!
SMACK


Crap!
GRAB!
THUNK THUNK
THUNK


CLATTER

He's insane...
His eyes...
©HHT

Yaichirou!
Yaichirou!
!



ZZT
THUD

Yaichirou!

ZZT

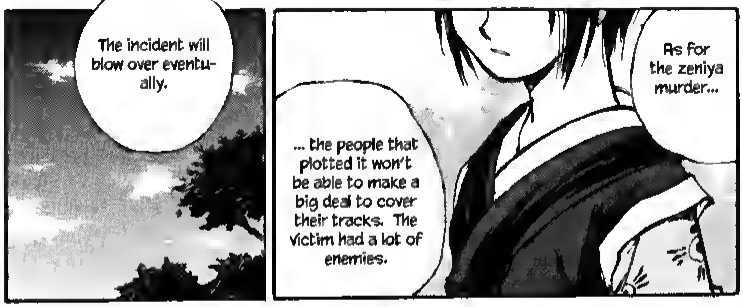
Yaichirou!
Yaichirou!
Yaichirou!
Yaichirou..
Mizuha...
I couldn't...
...become a samurai
Mizuha, forgive me.

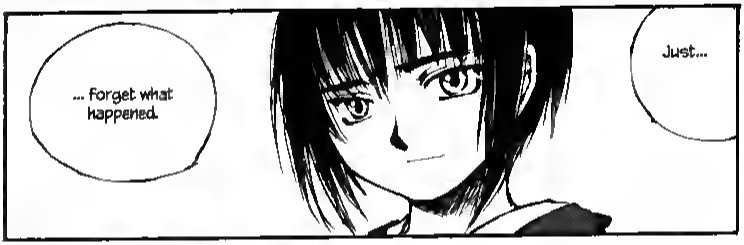
You're not dreaming!
Yai-chirou!
Yaich-irou...
Don't go!
Your hands are warm.
I don't want to wake up from this dream.
When I'm awake, I only know of suffering...
Is this really a dream?
Don't leave me!
No!

Get away from me!
……
ZA
……
You're the...
... real murderer!
BSSH
Jintetsu!

It'll be morning soon.
What are you going to do?
I've seen you spinning tops...
That's right. I'll help you dig a grave.
Thanks.
That's what happened.
He's training hard, and...
Your brother's still in Edo.
... he's forgotten about you.

I heard about the zeniya getting murdered...
... during my travels.
It seems like he was hanging with the wrong people. .
... and got wrapped up in their affairs.
He wanted to see you, but he couldn't.
He probably suffered a lot.
He probably couldn't stay same, but...
... he did end up killing innocent people. That doesn't change.
It wasn't wrong for Jintetsu...
... to kill him.


The incident will blow over eventually.
As for the zeniya murder...
... the people that plotted it won't be able to make a big deal to cover their tracks. The victim had a lot of enemies.


Just...
... forget what happened.

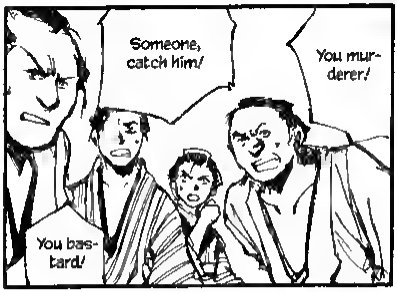
The village knows that the phantom was a human being.
They know about the scar, and eventually, people will find out that it was my brother.
My brother...
... killed a villager.

I will...
ZZT
... tell the people the truth.
I'd rather tell the truth...
... than live my life in fear.
Do you have any place to go?
No.
If I go to a big town...
... I'm sure I can find work.
It's a way for me to pay for my brother's sins.
That's unlikely.
I have no choice.

So, the mask I heard about was a steel mask!
You're the phantom of the Gokumon Pass!

What's with the ruckus?

I'm the killer phantom! If you wanna live, get outta my way and shut yer trap!
That's right!


Someone, catch him!
You murderer!
You bastard!

Look at the scar on his hand!

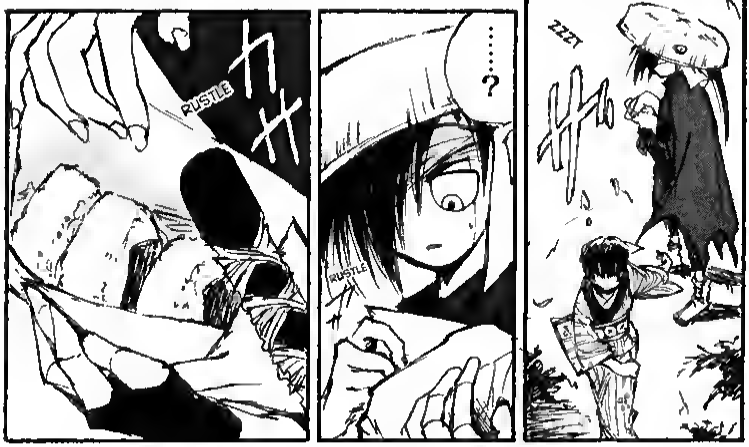
SHAAA!
CHH!
He's getting away!
KYAAAH!
Whoa!
He drew his sword!
Run before he kills you!
GRAB
Watch out!
DO DASH

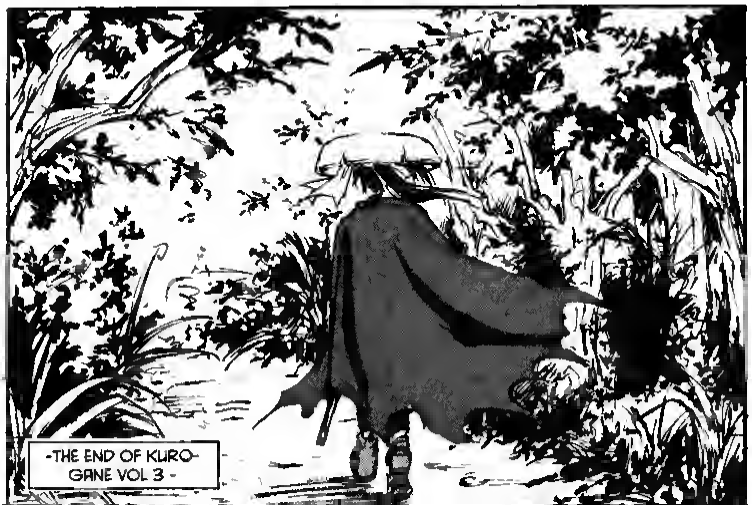
Take this!
You killed innocent people!
I hope you rot in hell!
THUMP, THUMP, THUNK
Is this who you really are...
Jintetsu...

Makoto...
That was a dumb thing to do.
I even drew a scar with some ink.
I thought I did well
HEH
You're a moron.
Well...
I don't want a nice girl like her to be unhappy either.

I didn't help you! I just needed to prove that I'm the capable
Makoto the Scarlet Sparrow! I can defend of myself.
Thanks for helping me.
ZZIU
Good-bye!
I can't figure her out.

Mizuka-
-san.
?
CRINKLE
.....


RUSTLE
RUSTLE
.....?
ZZZT


-THE END OF KURO-
GANE VOL 3 -

Translation Notes

Japanese is a tricky language for most Westerners, and translation is often more art than science. For your edification and reading pleasure, here are notes on some of the places where we could have gone in a different direction in our translation of the work, or where a Japanese cultural reference is used.

***Kitsune**, page 12*

Kitsune means fox in Japanese. Within the Shinto faith, *kitsune* is associated with Inari, the rice god. In Japanese folklore, *kitsune*, or fox spirit, possesses magical powers, including shapeshifting abilities. There are two major types of *kitsune*. The *myobu*, or celestial fox, associated with Inari, who are benevolent. The *nogitsune*, or wild fox (literally "field fox"), are often, though not always, presented as malicious. The most common human form of a *kitsune* is a beautiful woman. *Kitsunes* are known for tricking humans, which explains Jintetsu's comment on [12.7]

The mask that Yaichirou wears [168.4] is a mask of the *kitsune*.

***Karakuri doll**, page 22*
Karakuri dalls are automated dalls that use variaus mechanisms ta allaw mavement. Papular during the Edo period, *karokuri* dalls were created as entertainment far the feudal lords. The Zashiki *karokuri* is the most technologically complex and preciaus, using Western clockwork mechanisms, although some were powered by sand, mercury and even steam power.

***Gokumon**, page 161*
Gokumon means "prison gate" in Japanese.

Really?
Recently, an old ghost of Tsujikiri is rumored to attack travelers.
If you go south on this Iiraniwakko Trail towards the Reihenki Trail, you'll come across the Gokumon Pass.

***Tsujikiri**, page 161*
Tsujikiri is a villain that kills innocent peaple with a sword, ond sometimes strips the victim af all possessians (also called a phantom killer). It also refers to a villain that kills a passerby to test the sharpness af his new sword.

***Meito**, page 178*
Meito is a sword inscribed with the name of the swordsmith.

***Wakato**, page 192*
Wakato is a foot soldier or underling of a retainer or vassal. It also refers to a young samurai, or a lower-ranking samurai.

***Zeniya**, page 200*
Zeniya is a money-exchanging business. It is also used as a title to refer to a person that is in the business. During the Edo period, jobs were stratified according to social class. Therefore, the title of *zeniya* would describe a man's profession as well as his class.

***Order of birth**, page 203*
In the Japanese language, the order of birth is commonly indicated in the word used to describe a person. In the phrase, "He's the son of the Kamedaya family," the literal translation would be, "He's the second oldest son of the Kamedaya family." In Japanese, the word *cho-nan* refers to the oldest son, *ji-nan* refers to the second oldest, *san-nan* refers to the third son, *yon-nan* refers to the fourth son, etc. In English, it is common to refer to just the gender of your sibling, such as "he's my brother." However, in Japanese, when you refer to your siblings, the word will almost always indicate their order of birth in reference *to* you. For example, if you were to refer to your older brother, you would use the word *oni-chan*. A younger brother would be called *oto-to*.

***Ronin**, page 212*

Ronin refers to a masterless samurai during the Edo period. In modern Japan, the word refers to students that have failed the entrance exam to the university of their choice, and is waiting for another chance. It is not uncommon far many students to retake an entrance exam several times before entering college

The following pages show art that was originally in the Japanese edition of *Kurogane* volume 3 as a double-sided fold-out mini-poster. Enjoy!

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KEI TŌME

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